

COMMUNITY, LEADERSHIP, AND MASS-ELITE RELATIONS:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE CHINESE  
VILLAGES IN THE REFORM ERA

A Dissertation

by

WEI SHAN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2007

Major Subject: Political Science

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Chair of Committee,	Robert Harmel
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## ABSTRACT

Community, Leadership, and Mass-Elite Relations: An Investigation into Political  
Leadership in the Chinese Villages in the Reform Era. (December 2007)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Robert Harmel

What is the role of political leadership in the mechanisms that bind general masses and political elites behind a certain policy program? And what factors account for the changes in political leadership? The mechanisms connecting citizens and elites are crucial for regime stability. The malfunction of such mechanisms, for instance, the absence of citizen-elite agreement on policy issues, or low levels of public trust in elites, undermines political support and legitimacy of the existing regime. Focusing on rural communities in China, this dissertation attempts to examine how leader-follower relations in the grassroots communities influence mass-elite interactions, and how the community contextual factors shape those leader-follower relations.

Existing studies tend to focus on the patron-client connections between peasant villagers and local officials, but largely to the neglect of other kinds of social relations. Based on fieldwork interviews and panel survey data from China, I show that informal social relations, like leadership, have a significant impact on mass-elite opinion connections

and public trust in local elites. By leadership or leadership relations, I refer to the mutuality of leader-follower connection that is based on either authoritative or non-authoritative, but largely non-coercive influence by both sides. An element of non-authoritative quality that binds a group of people (i.e. followers) behind a leader is especially important. For this reason, leadership tends to be significant in a local community setting, such as in a village, that is thick with interpersonal relations.

My study finds how formal elections and leadership relations in local communities co-determine the direction of opinion influence between the local elite and ordinary citizens, and how leadership facilitates citizens' belief that their local leaders are trustworthy. Further, my analysis shows that as market activities and state control penetrate into village communities, leadership relations themselves undergo changes in that the contextual factors of the rural community have tremendous predictive power on human networks within the community. These changes imply that the political and economic reforms in the Chinese countryside have important consequences regarding local political leadership as well as mechanisms that bind masses and elites together.

TO MY MOTHER AND WIFE

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The quantitative data analyzed in this dissertation are from a collaborative survey project undertaken by the Research Center on Contemporary China at Peking University and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. I would like to thank these two institutions, as well as Kent Jennings, Melanie Manion and their colleagues, for allowing me to use the data.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

From 2003 to 2004, I participated in two field research projects about rural governance in China<sup>1</sup>, with the intention of collecting information and data for my dissertation.

Within around 10 months, I frequently traveled to and stayed in villages, interviewing village cadres and ordinary villagers. I asked my interviewees such questions as “What are the major jobs of the village committee in your locality?” “Who is in charge of your village enterprises, the party secretary or the village chief?” and “How do you assess your relations with villagers today in compared with those relations ten years ago?”

Consistently, I found that those grassroots party or state cadres complained of “it’s been getting hard to lead people.” For instance, a couple of cadres told me that:

In the early 1990s, villagers generally respected you (cadres) or even revered you... whatever you said had an authority over them (villagers)...now, um, you have to be really cautious, because they always want to challenge you, they always try to seize on your mistakes and file complaints to the upper-level government.

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This dissertation follows the style of *American Political Science Review*.

<sup>1</sup> The Project of Rural Governance in China and the European Union-China Training Program on Village Governance, conducted by the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

To be a good village cadre, now you have to have a higher cultural level (educational level). You must behave yourself...Say, you cannot get mad with drink at villagers any more...You must please the masses as much as possible.

On the other side, an ordinary villager said:

Ten years ago, it was the cadres who took care of absolutely everything. We just followed whatever they said. Now it (decision making) is getting open...Cadres are more civilized (than before)...They are playing nice guys and trying not to offend anyone.

From these statements we can clearly observe a “decline” of local leadership: “leaders” have found difficult to lead as “followers” are becoming more challenging. This is not unique to the Chinese villages. In western societies, scholars also noticed a “crisis” or “depletion” of political leadership. While James M. Burns attributed the crisis to “the mediocrity or irresponsibility of so many of the men and women in power” (1978:1) and Stanley A. Renshon contended that “increasing diversity and cultural conflict place strong pressures on leadership capital accumulation in societies like the United States” (2000:199), what factors account for the changes in leadership in rural China? Are there any important political implications of such changes?

Leadership has been a subject of contemplation and debate at least since the time of Socrates (Kellerman, 1984; Bass, 1990; Rejai and Phillips, 2002). It is important because it is a universal activity in humankind and it addresses one of the most fundamental issues in human societies: how to organize people effectively. The leader-follower relations lie at the center of interconnected social networks that link them physically or psychically with other human beings (Paige, 1977:1-3; see also Horner, 1997:270). Within those social networks, effective leadership provides “higher-quality and more efficient goods and services; it provides a sense of cohesiveness, personal development, and higher levels of satisfaction...and it provides an overarching sense of direction and vision, an alignment with the environment...” (Wart, 2003:214). Even as the post-materialist values rise up in western democracies, as considerable segments of the public pursue new social movements characterized as “a very limited internal division of labor and a low degree of differentiation of specific functional roles, especially elite roles” (Schmitt, 1989:584; Inglehart, 1971), leadership is still a meaningful category. Its importance points not to hierarchic authority but to leaders’ capability to mobilize mass constituencies (Schmitt, 1989:594; Rohrshneider, 1993).

Thus far social scientists have approached leadership in four distinctive ways (House and Aditya, 1997; Horner, 1997; Antonakis, et al., 2004). The first trend examines the attributes of leaders. This theoretical tradition believes that it is certain individual characteristics that differentiate leaders from nonleaders. Those characteristics include gender, height, physical energy, personality, as well as other psychological traits. A

second major paradigm of leadership study is known as the behavioral school of leadership. It focuses on how leaders behave and relates these behaviors (for instance, task-oriented or person-oriented behaviors) to various criteria of leader effectiveness. A third theoretical approach seeks to understand leadership from the situation in which leaders exist. The effectiveness of leadership is contingent on the interactions between situational variables and leader personality and leader behaviors. Environment of leadership are conceptualized as different levels of favorability for influence. Finally, a recent school of leadership theories emphasizes the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers. The interactions or exchanges of the two parties are important for the nature and effectiveness of leadership. This school can be labeled as “the relational approach.”

### **Three Limitations of Existing Leadership Studies**

Although there are such developments, in his groundbreaking volume Burns reminded us that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (1978:2). After almost 30 years of the publication of Burns’ book, however, this statement remains as valid as it originally was. The study of leadership is still far from satisfied, especially in the political science field. In spite of the great amount of researches, we’ve made little progress in search of regularities and standards by which to conceptualize and evaluate leadership.

Three limitations in the existing research, I believe, have constrained us from fully exploring the phenomena of leadership. The first one is the narrow focus of our studies. While there are four distinctive theoretical traditions, three of them share a common feature: they all center at one party of the leadership structure—the leader, and more or less, ignore those being led.<sup>2</sup> No matter whether the study focuses on leader traits, leader behavior, or the interaction between the leader and her environment, the role of follower characteristics, the role of the leader-follower interactions, are excluded from the research landscape. This narrowness especially undermines leadership studies in political science, because political scientists have so far yet to develop any theories along the relational approach as sociologists of industrial organizations have done in the vertical dyadic linkage theory or the leader-member exchange theory (Dansereau, 1995; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Most studies of political leadership are simply studies of political leaders. Even Burns, who made the most extraordinary effort to push political leadership study away from the leader-centered traditions, does not completely avoid this limitation. Although he accepted that leadership is “inseparable from follower’s needs and goals,” he insisted that leaders take the major part in the connections with followers and ignored the possibility that followers could take initiatives. He wrote, “the leader takes the initiative in making the leader-led connection; it is the leader who creates the links that allow communication and exchange to take place” (Burns, 1978:19, 20). Joseph C. Rost, another great scholar in political leadership, criticized the dominant tendency “of focusing only on the leader” and argued that “only people who are active in

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<sup>2</sup> The fourth tradition, the leader-follower relational approach, is an exception to this pattern.



the leadership process are followers” (1993:27, 108). However, he also paid much more attention to the leaders rather than the followers in his inspiring book. Narrow focus limits further development in this field.

A second limitation that restricts the development of leadership study is ethnocentrism or parochialism. In an extensive and insightful field survey on the social scientific study of leadership, House and Aditya present a criticism of the existing scholarship (1997:409-10):

The leadership literature is based on a limiting set of assumptions, mostly reflecting Western industrialized culture. Almost all of the prevailing theories of leadership, and about 98% of the empirical evidence at hand, are rather distinctly American in character: individualistic rather than collectivistic,...assuming centrality of work and democratic value orientation, and emphasizing assumptions of rationality rather than asceticism, religion, or superstition. Further, a number of important topics are largely ignored or only very recently addressed in the leadership literature.

This parochial trend in leadership studies mean that leadership in most non-Western cultures hasn't been fully investigated. If leadership is a type of human activities, these activities must be embedded in a larger cultural background. National, community, or organizational cultures create common experience, common language and rhetorical

understanding that facilitate the communication between citizens and political elites, which in turn promotes the exercise of leadership (Renshon, 2001:207). In addition, as culture shapes people's preferences or behavior, people from different types of culture may be sensitive to different types of leadership. Citizens from Eastern cultures are more likely to identify with transformational leadership than people from Western cultures (Lord, et al., 2001:325). As these arguments stand, the parochial-oriented leadership study constitutes a real problem: we have so far looked at only the tip of the iceberg while we should examine its entire body. It will be fruitful if leadership scholars look beyond the setting of the Western industrialized societies to explore leadership in different types of culture. This investigation may provide new directions for the development of future leadership theory and empirical research.

A third limitation of current leadership study is unique to political science. That is, we are largely ignorant of developments in other social science disciplines and hence benefit very little from wisdom of psychologists, sociologists, and management scholars. Since late 1970s, as a result of the rise of the vertical dyadic paradigm (Dansereau, 1995; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), the mainstream leadership researches have been largely focused on the relational approach, that is, how the interactions or exchange between leaders and followers make a difference. Students of political leadership are generally outside this paradigm. On the other hand, leadership scholars in other disciplines did not hesitate when they introduced new concepts or research approaches into their own fields. For example, political scientist Burns (1978) proposed the concept of "transformational

leadership.” In the past three decades, this concept has inspired a huge amount of research in organizational sociology and management studies; whereas in political science there have been very few follow-up studies.

### **Mass-Elite Relations**

In this dissertation research I attempt to investigate the effects of political leadership on mass-elite relations in the Chinese rural communities. How does the particular context—rural communities—influence local leadership in an era of political and economic reform? What is the impact of the leader-follower relations on mass-elite interactions in the grassroots? In two aspects mass-elite relations are addressed. The first aspect is the opinion linkage between citizens and political office holders, that is, how the two parties achieve opinion congruence on policy issues through mutual influences. The other aspect is the attitudinal linkage between the two—the belief of the general public that they trust their rulers.

Both types of mass-elite connections are crucial for our understanding of regime stability. Stability is a central problem in Chinese politics. Since the economic reform began in the late 1970s, one debate has been going on in the scholarly community of Chinese politics: will this dramatic economic change lead to a stable political transformation or lead to a catastrophic regime collapse (Goldstone, 1995; Huang, 1995)? For a better

understanding of this debate, we need more systematical investigations into mass-elite relations.

Why is opinion linkage important? Normatively, democratic theorists contend only if political elites share the preferences of citizens, the rule of elites can be regarded as legitimate (Pitkin, 1967:209-10). As Robert Dahl's justification of democracy, "a democratic government provides an orderly and peaceful process by means of which a majority of citizens can induce the government to do what they most want it to do and to avoid doing what they most want it not to do" (1989:95). Apart from the normative aspects, political scientists have long realized that citizen-elite linkages are "an essential element of any consideration of systemic stability regardless of the type of political system analyzed" (Sullivan, 1974:637). The absence of linkages or the low levels of connections between citizens and elites can have serious political consequences, especially in societies experiencing profound economic and political reforms. In those societies, if political office holders "are significantly out of step with popular preferences, implementing difficult or controversial policies will be that much harder; similarly, if ordinary citizens have preferences that differ from those of the elite...they could come to view the political and economic reforms as either meaningless or lacking legitimacy. Under these circumstances the citizenry may not only fail to comply with the reforms but they may act to undermine them" (Miller, et al., 1995:30). That is to say, opinion linkage is crucial for regime stability.

Political trust is also critical to a polity's stability. It is an important component of political support and it constitutes the basis of legitimacy for a government (Easton, 1965:273). As Hetherington (1998) found in a study of the American political system, declining trust is a powerful cause of dissatisfaction with political elites. "Low trust helps create a political environment in which it is more difficult for leaders to succeed" (1998:791). Lack of trust reduces politicians' "room to maneuver when it encounters difficulties in performing its more immediate political tasks" (Shi, 2001:401). Trust is especially crucial for societies experiencing rapid political and economic reforms (Mishler and Rose, 2001). In those societies, as there are great amount of uncertainty and risk, the political regime is particularly in need for political support and room to maneuver.

### **Précis of the Study**

By examining the mass-elite connection questions, I hope to contribute to the literature of political leadership in three aspects. First, this research conceptualizes leadership as a dyadic relationship between the leader and the follower. The follower in this relationship is not a passive recipient any more, but an actor helps in the formation of the leadership connection. This differs from most political leadership studies that concentrate only on political leaders. Second, the empirical setting of the study is the Chinese villages, a non-Western, less-industrialized, and more collectivistic setting. In such a context, what are the antecedents to the formation of leadership relations? And

how do these relations make a difference? To seek answers to these questions, I hope, will facilitate political leadership research moving toward a non-parochial direction. Finally, this dissertation attempts to integrate leadership theories from other disciplines into political inquiries. Theoretical and empirical analyses of the emergence and impact of leadership benefit from theories in sociology of organizations and psychology.

Studies of Chinese political leadership have been mostly concentrated on the party or state leaders at the national level (Pittinsky and Zhu, 2005). And without surprise, most of such researches are leader-centered. That is, the so-called leadership studies are actually studying individual political elites. To date, there is no serious effort to examine political leadership at the grassroots level with a non-leader-centered approach. To make this research expedition more interesting, the Chinese villages have been in rapid transformation. Twenty-five years ago, most villages were dominated by traditional crop raising, largely isolated from external market, and overwhelmed by traditional customs and culture. Today, most villages are involved in economic activities related to market. Many of them have disappeared in the overspreading cities. A great number of young and middle-aged labors cannot live with the narrow margin of profit from crop farming any more, moving to cities to seeking a better living. Traditional culture and values in villages are on the decline or even collapsing. Political structures have been rebuilt as well. For the first time, competitive elections for administrative positions have been introduced into villages. It's remained unexplored how these political and economic changes affect leader-follower relations in villages and

what are the political consequences of those relations. It is the purpose of this dissertation to deal with these issues.

The empirical analysis is based on both interview data and quantitative survey data. From August 2003 to April 2004, and December 2004, I conducted fieldwork in six provinces (Shaanxi, Anhui, Chongqing, Zhejiang, Hunan, and Jiangsu). I interviewed party-state cadres at the county, township, and village levels, as well as a small number of villagers. Questions involved village elections, economic development, the actual operation of the three levels of administration, and mass-cadre relations. The quantitative data are from 1990 and 1996 Four-County Study of Chinese Local Government and Political Economy Survey, which were collected by scholars from the University of Michigan and Peking University. Respondents were drawn from a stratified probability- proportionate-to-size sample in four counties from four provinces.<sup>3</sup> The 1990 survey includes 1149 villagers and 59 village cadres from 59 villages (one cadre per village, including 34 party secretaries and 25 village administrative chiefs); the 1996 study includes 1248 villagers and 58 cadres from 58 villages (one cadre per village, composed of 31 party secretaries and 27 village administrative chiefs). 59.13% of respondents in the 1996 survey were also surveyed in the 1990 study.

In addition to this introduction, the rest chapters proceed in the following order. Chapter II discusses theoretical issues of leadership and mass-elite relations. While existing

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed description of the dataset, see Manion, 1996 and Manion, 2006.

literature on mass-elite relations in rural communities appealed to the totalitarian model and the patron-client model, this research seeks to contribute to this literature from the perspective of leadership study. Based on a psychological theory, I focus on one important aspect of leadership: the interpersonal psychological connection between citizens and cadres. This type of relations is especially significant in a local community setting, such as in a village, that is thick with interpersonal interactions. While the political and economic transformation of local communities restructures the context where leadership is embedded, the formation and styles of leadership become contingent on this transformation. Furthermore, the existence of leadership relations between masses and elites may have a double-sided impact on the mass-elite relations. On the one hand, leadership weakens democratic representative linkage between voters and elected village heads. On the other, leadership promotes citizens' belief that party-state cadres are trustworthy.

Chapter III investigates the determinants of community leadership, specifically, how changes in the community setting affect the formation and styles of leadership.

Variances in the community context are conceptualized as two dimensions of changes in modes of governance in communities: one is from a clan mode to a market mode of governance, and another is from a clan mode to a bureaucratic mode. Being measured as the village-market and village-state relations, these two dimensions are found to have a significant impact on both the emergence and styles of leadership between village cadres and villagers. Other community factors, such as village elections and kinship networks,



are also taken into account. Results point to the significant destructive effects of dominant kinships on leadership relations.

The fourth and fifth chapters deal with the effects of leadership when it is an independent variable. Chapter IV provides an empirical analysis of the association between leadership and representation. Representative linkage is the election-based connections between masses and elites, through which public opinion exerts influences on elite opinion. Defined as an interpersonal influence process, leadership has an impact on the opinion linkages between the general public and political officials. Based on the analysis of the mutuality of mass-elite opinions, this chapter argues that in the Chinese countryside, leadership may play as a negative force to representation—it weakens the impact of public opinion on local cadres.

Chapter V, as the third empirical chapter, probes into the effects of leadership on another aspect of mass-elite linkage—to what extent the general mass trust those political office holders. According to the Leader-Member Exchange theory, fully developed leadership relations are characterized as a high-quality interpersonal interaction, that is, leaders and followers are involved in the exchange of psychological satisfaction, positive affect, respect, and loyalty. Political elites who are recognized as leaders are more likely to receive trust from citizens than non-leader elites. Empirical findings support this argument.

The last chapter is the conclusion. It surveys the possible connection between leadership and social capital, suggesting that leadership can be viewed as a kind of vertical social capital. Leadership capital plays an important role in rural community governance, especially through affecting citizen-elite relations. Also, in this section I make some predictions regarding changes in rural leadership in the near future and their effects upon rural politics in China. Finally, this chapter discusses the limitations of this dissertation research and makes some suggestions for future analysis of local political leadership in Chinese villages or elsewhere.

## CHAPTER II

### COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AS AN INFORMAL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

This dissertation research explores political leadership and mass-elite relations in the Chinese villages during the reform era. What are the determinants of the changes in the leader-follower relations? How do the leadership relations influence mass-elite linkages in villages? This chapter discusses general theoretical issues concerning these questions. More detailed theoretical discusses as well as hypotheses are presented in the next several chapters. In this chapter I first review existing literature on mass-elite relations in rural China; then address the concept of leadership and define it as a type of informal social relationship; finally I discuss why the leadership relationship is politically important in Chinese rural communities.

#### **Mass-Elite Relations in Chinese Villages: Formal vs. Informal**

So far there have been generally two theoretical traditions to examine mass-elite relations in the Chinese countryside since 1949: one focuses on formal party-state institutions and mechanisms of political economic control; the other explores informal connections between local officials and citizens. In the first tradition lie the totalitarian model, the predatory state theory, and the election-based citizen-elite linkages. Along the approach addressing informal relations, there is the patron-client theory.

Since the field of Chinese politics began to grow in 1960s, it was once popularly accepted that Chinese society could be characterized as a totalitarian model, with a highly centralized political power and an unprecedented penetration of the state into society (Li, 1998:18). The grassroots mass-elite relationship is viewed as party cadres' absolute power over the general masses. Elites try to control and mobilize the public and suppress any independent claims and actions (Oi, 1985:239). When China began to open its door to the world in 1980s, the totalitarian paradigm was gradually abandoned by most researchers largely because it did not accurately reflect the political reality any more (Dittmer, 1996). Thereafter, scholars have been seeking alternative explanations for the changing mass-elite relations (e.g. Shue, 1988; Walder, 1995). Inspired by the concept of "predatory state,"<sup>4</sup> Lu (1997) argued that the local state in the Chinese countryside is growing predatory. The decline of the totalitarian system weakened the central control over local agents. Officials in the local state apparatus have therefore enjoyed considerable autonomy and discretion, which enables them to maximize their own interests which are not necessarily congruent with the central policy. As a result, unruly exaction from peasants increases without effective restrictions, which has significantly deteriorated citizen-cadre relations in the countryside and aroused a lot of collective petitions, protests, and even violent unrests (Lu, 1997; Bernstein and Lu, 2000).

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<sup>4</sup> In his original study about the Third World state, Evans (1989) proposed the concept "predatory state," which is characterized as patrimonial tradition, excessive bureaucratization, and control of the state apparatus by a small group of individuals.

While the predatory local state theory explains well the unleashed taxation burden of peasants and conflictual mass-elite relations in the past decade,<sup>5</sup> it discounts peasants' ability to influence elites, affect policy implementation, and pursue interests. As the political reform proceeds further into villages, another line of studies examines how institutional changes encourage ordinary villagers to exert influence on local party secretaries and village chiefs. Most of such studies concentrate on the effects of village elections. Since 1987 the communist government has promoted free and competitive elections for positions in the village administration (O'Brien and Li, 2000). Although the quality of enforcing elections varies substantially cross regions, systematic investigations have revealed that those elections did affect the mass-elite linkage at the grassroots level. Based on survey data analysis, Manion (1996) found that village elections in China made village leaders more responsive to their constituencies. Electoral contestation has established a representative linkage between voters and elected officials which is familiar to Western democracies. Further analysis suggested that village elections encourage villagers to ask for citizenship rights they've never enjoyed (O'Brien, 2001; Li and O'Brien, 1996), and promote villagers' belief that governmental authorities are responsive to their demands and therefore they are more active in participating in local politics and affecting policy implementation (Li, 2003).

Another line of theoretical tradition contends that it is insufficient to concentrate only on formal structures and mechanisms and more intellectual attentions should be paid to the

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<sup>5</sup> As a response to the rising collective protests of peasants, the agricultural tax, as well as a batch of other unruly exactions, was abolished all over the country in 2005.

informal dimension of Chinese politics. The most important theoretical framework to address informal mass-elite relations in the rural grassroots is the patron-client model. Departing from the formal politics approach, the clientelist model views the mass-elite connections as more personalistic, subjective, and flexible. The patron-client relationship is a vertical dyadic linkage of two persons “of unequal status, power or resources,” who involve direct personal attachment to each other and exchange of favors or assurances of aid (Lande, 1977:20). This type of interpersonal linkage most likely emerges in societies with an imperfect market and a weakly developed legal system (Duara, 1990:280). Individual peasants or villagers depend on a powerful local patron, usually a party branch secretary or a village chief in the Chinese case, for scarce resources such as land, goods, or opportunities. In return, the patron receives support, loyalty, or services from peasants. Since in the Chinese countryside the formal channels for participation and interest articulation are only weakly established, through the patron-client alliance rural citizens develop an effective channel to interact with the party-state, to affect policy implementation, and to pursue their particular interests. Also through this alliance, local cadres have their basis of power strengthened (Oi, 1985; Oi, 1989; Yan, 1995).

Although the patron-client model provides valid and inspiring explanations for mass-elite relations during both the pre-reform and the reform period, in the recent decades it has been on a shaky ground as several of its assumptions are challenged. First, the clientelist relationship presumes peasants live at subsistence level, yet this is not the case

in contemporary China any more (Burns, 1979), especially after more than 20 years of rapid economic growth. Second, the dependence of peasants on local patrons for scarce resources has been weakened during the market transition. As mass media and public transportation expand further into remote counties, and more importantly, as market economic activities penetrate into every village and rural households become accustomed to buying and selling at the free market, villagers do not have to go to village cadres for necessary capital, information, or technology for their production.<sup>6</sup> More and more rural labors move into cities to make a living, which further ruins the resource dependence linkage between villagers and their local cadres. Finally, formal channels of participation and interest articulation have been getting stronger. In 2002, a Carter Center report indicated almost all of the 700,000 villages throughout the country had held at least one round of village elections. Those elections were legally required to be free and competitive. The central government also has attempted to improve governance institutions in the grassroots, for example, institutionalizing all-village meetings, making village budgets more transparent, lodging complaints with special bureaus (O'Brien and Li, 1995). These measures have encouraged rural citizens to participate in politics through the formal channels, therefore reduced their incentive to seek political equities through the clientelist connections.

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<sup>6</sup> Today, there may be only one key element for production still under the control of local cadres: land. In the Chinese system, land in rural area is under a collective ownership, that is, owned by the village community. The cadres make decisions on land allocations and issue permits for house constructions. But more and more central regulations have set restrictions on local cadres' power about land use, which to some extent undermined the resource dependence of peasants.

## **Leadership as Informal Social Relations**

In this research I would like to go along the informal politics tradition and explore the role of leadership as an informal social relationship that could affect mass-elite relations. As we've discussed in the introduction chapter, leadership is one of most fundamental human activities, yet we know little about its role in connecting humankind. Unlike most conventional studies of political leadership, which view leadership as the traits or behavior of leaders, this research defines leadership as an interpersonal relationship, that is, an informal social interaction. I am going to develop and test a theoretical framework about the determinants and consequences of leadership relations in rural communities.

### ***Why informal social relations?***

Why to study leadership as a type of informal social relations? First of all, informal relations are crucial in Chinese politics. Although the Communist government has made achievements in constructing formal institutions, the informal dimension remains "extremely" important (Dittmer, 1995). This is partly because of "the unsettled nature of the Chinese political scene throughout the twentieth century," and partly because of "the traditional aversion to law and a cultural preference for more moralistic and personalized authority relations" (Dittmer, 1995:1). As a contemporary Confucian scholar pointed out, in the traditional Chinese culture there is neither the division of private and public spheres, nor the dichotomy of individualism and collectivism, but a relationship-based



orientation (*guanxi benwei*) (Liang, 1974). The “relationship” here refers to a personalized informal connection. These personalized relationships are so pervasive in the political system that superiors and subordinates fit together “not by a book of rules but by the more deeply ingrained rules of proper human relationship. Authority lies not in an objectified body of laws or moral codes, but in subjective understandings of the meaning of leadership, superior-subordinate relationships...” (Pye, 1995:39). In such a political culture, actors cannot rely on one’s formal power base to defend one’s personal interests; official power can be easily divested of if there is no support from informal connections (Dittmer, 1995:11-12). As a result, the relationship between formal and informal politics is “fluid and ambiguous—informal groups are often absorbed into formal structures, and formal structures in turn operate with a great deal of infirmity” (Dittmer, 1995:14). In addition, as the clientelist paradigm is getting disconnected with the political reality, we need new conceptual tools to help us understand the informal dimension of Chinese politics. Under such circumstances, it is rather meaningful to explore how local political leadership plays as an informal relationship and affects mass-elite connections.

### ***Leadership as relationship***

One of the latest developments of leadership theory is the exploration of dyadic relationship between individual leaders and followers, such as Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) model (Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975), Leader Member Exchange theory (LMX) (Graen, Novak, and Sommerkamp, 1982), and Individualized Leadership

approach (Dansereau, Alutto, and Yammarino, 1984; Dansereau, 1995). The whole thrust of these theories is that leadership is a relationship between the leader and the led; this relationship takes place at the dyadic level. The leader acts as a role sender, sending different information about role expectations to different subordinates and rewards those who satisfy these expectations. The subordinate is role recipient and responds to the sent roles in distinctive ways (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Followers are not passive role receivers; they may reject, accept, or renegotiate roles sent from their leaders. Through this process, superiors become leaders and subordinates become followers.

As a dyadic relationship between the leader and the follower, leadership is actually a process of interpersonal influence. In this process, one party uses noncoercive influence to direct, arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives or intentions of the other party/parties (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990; Rost 1993). According to this definition, we need to distinguish the leader-follower relationship from the elite-mass tie. Firstly, the leader-follower relationship is not synonymous with the elite-mass connection. Elites are not necessarily leaders and citizens are not automatically followers. Political elites are those who hold political offices, in charge of policy making and implementation. That is, this concept is based on formal positions such as executives, legislators, bureaucrats, and party officials (Paige, 1977:86). In contrast, political leaders are those elites who are actually or perceived to be involved in the interpersonal influence with their followers. The elite-mass relationship is not a leader-follower association unless both elites and masses are actually engaged in the leadership process.

Secondly, elites imply inequality in power and high positions on a ladder of formal hierarchic system. Elites have an influence on the masses because they possess official authority and power, and it is the legal obligation of the general public to comply with them. By contrast, leadership can make a difference without resorting to formal authority, power, or coercion. In the leadership process, the leader seeks to direct, induce, or satisfy the follower's motives or intentions, and thus changes the follower's attitudes or opinions. In this sense, we see leadership as an informal social relationship, differing from formal citizen-official relations.

Finally, in the mass-elite dyad, the main direction of influence is "from the top down, not from bottom up; elites are expected to dominate not to be responsive" (Paige, 1977:86-87). In comparison, the influence relationship in leadership can be reciprocal; leaders and followers influence one another. Usually, leaders seek to lead or direct followers' opinions. Yet as Rost points out, followers are not passive recipients, they "are active agents in the leadership relationship...(T)here are times when followers may exert more influence than leaders, times when they may seize the initiative, and times when their purposes drive the relationship" (1993:112). More importantly, followers participate in building leadership relations. They may actively choose a leader and decide to follow him or her, based on how much the leader is perceived to represent their values and identities (Dixon, 2003; Shamir, et al., 1993). A leader would be ineffective "if followers do not accept and commit themselves to a leader's vision" (Erez and Earley,

1993:184). Hence, leaders often need to be responsive to followers' needs or opinions in order to sustain a leadership connection.

In summary, leadership is an informal type of social relationship, which is essentially different from mass-elite relations that are based on formal authority. In the following sections of this dissertation research, I use "elite" to refer to cadres, officials, or bureaucrats who hold official positions. Only when these figures are actually involved in leadership relations, I refer to them as "leaders" and thus the citizens become "followers."

Furthermore, although both leadership and clientelism are informal relations, they differ in at least two key aspects. First, they are constructed on different basis. The patron-client relationship is possible because of the resource dependence of peasants on local powerful figures; whereas the leadership relation is based on interpersonal influence, which is originally from personal attractions, persuasions, ambitions, or desires. On the other hand, although both are involved in interpersonal exchanges, what is exchanged is different. For patrons and clients, they trade physical interests for loyalty or services; for leaders and followers, they exchange visions, motivations, affect, trust, and satisfaction. Simply speaking, while the clientelist tie must be engaged in physical interests, the leadership relation is largely a psychological bond.

### ***Leadership Category Agreement (LCA)***

Measuring leadership is no easy task. In political science, leadership was traditionally measured as the effects or impact of leadership (Burns, 1978:22; Blondel, 1987:80): how much difference the leadership makes; how much impact the leader has on the societies they rule. There are two problems with this “effect” measurement. First, some types of leadership may not necessarily produce observable impact. There could be situations that the intended effect of leadership is “no effect” or “no action.” Second, this is not a measure of leadership *itself*, but the result of the existence of leadership. Validity problem could emerge from this measuring strategy.<sup>7</sup>

As we define leadership as a process in which one party directs, arouses, engages, and satisfy the motives and intentions of the other party, a direct measure of leadership should tap to what degree the leader has directed or made differences in the follower’s intentions and motives. Such measurement requires sophisticated survey battery and techniques to catch the psychological process in both the leader’s and the follower’s mind. In the absence of such data, in this research I do not examine directly the leadership process. Instead, the focus is on a crucial antecedent to leadership, the agreement on leadership categories between potential leaders and followers.

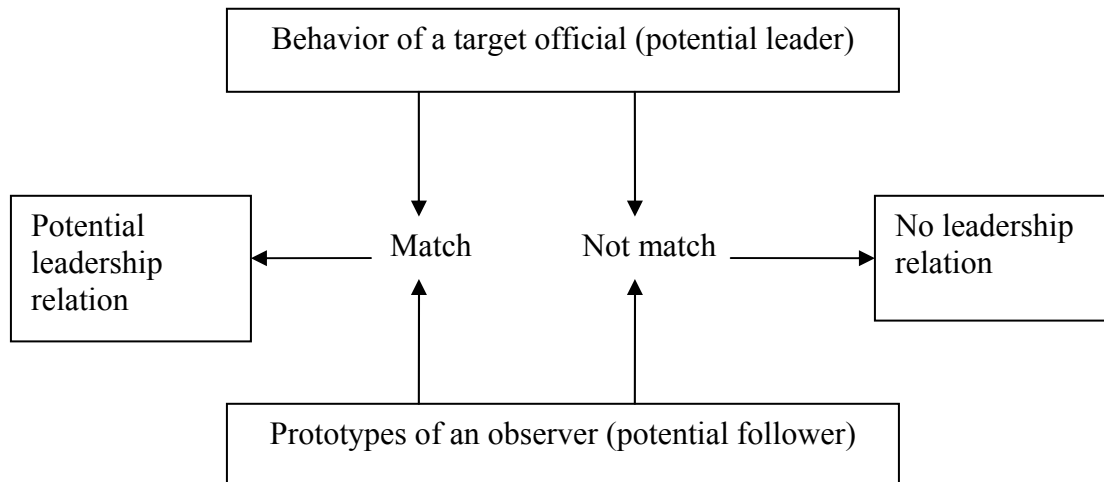
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<sup>7</sup> For example, we observe an economic growth during the rule of a certain leader. According to the “effect” measurement, we can use this growth to indicate the “degree” of leadership. However, the economic growth may be in fact due to good weather or new technology. In this case, the “effect” measure of leadership does not measure leadership at all.

Here we benefit from a psychological theory: leadership categorization theory, which addresses contributors to the formation or emergence of leadership relations.

Psychologist Lord and his colleagues (Lord, et al., 1984; Load, et al., 1982) have found that the perceptual process of followers in identifying leaders is largely a process of categorization. Individuals usually store in mind a set of categories regarding the image of what the typical leader is like. Most people from the same culture generally share the same sets of categories (Gerstner and Day, 1994). These categories describe the “prototypes” of leaders. A prototype is “an abstract composite of the most representative attributes of category members” (Lord, et al., 1984:346). When people observe behaviors of an office holder, they “note particular salient characteristics and compare them against their own leadership prototypes” (Shamir, 1995:24-25). The better the match between the behavior of a target individual and a prototype in the observer’s mind, the more likely for that individual to be perceived as a “leader” by the observer. That is, the degree to which an official’s leading behavior fits a citizen’s leadership prototypes is positively related to the emergence of leadership. Figure 2.1 illustrates the basic logic of this theory.

**Figure 2.1: Leadership Categorization Theory**



Based on this theory I generate a variable, Leadership Category Agreement (LCA thereafter), which is the degree of match between citizens' preferred leadership categories and behaviors of political elites. We can see this variable essentially indicates how much leadership supplies of elites meet citizens' leadership expectation. A high score of LCA has a positive impact on the possibility of a leadership relationship. Although this variable does not directly measure the established leader-follower relationship per se, it addresses one crucial aspect of leadership process: the level of congruence between public expectation and elite supplies regarding leadership. This factor may not only be critical to the formation of leadership relations, but have an impact on mass-elite linkages such as opinion agreement or political trust. In the following empirical analyses I am going to discuss this issue in more details.

### ***Leadership styles***

Another concept we need to examine is leadership styles. In literature, leader style is defined as “an amalgam of the personal characteristics an individual possesses, and thus is reflective of one’s intelligence, personality, social, and political skill.” It refers to “the manner in which the behavior is expressed rather than the behavior itself”(Hall, et al., 2004:521). In other words, leader style influences how a leader is perceived and evaluated by followers; followers may respond in a correspondent way. For instance, a dictatorial leader tends to make decisions in an arbitrary manner; followers of this leader are likely to be obedient and passive in the decision-making process. In this research we define two types of leader style: paternal and fraternal leaders. A fraternal leader usually acts like a considerate superior or equal colleague to followers. He or she is apt to listen to people’s needs and opinions and accommodate more popular participation in decision-making. The leader not only leads public opinions, but also is responsive to citizens. Nevertheless, if the leader style is paternal-oriented, with which the leader behave like an authoritarian father or boss, even elected leaders tend to ignore citizens’ preferences and treat followers in a nonresponsive way.

Leader style determines the style of a leadership relationship. For example, a paternal leader results in a paternal leadership. In this research, the analysis is focused on LCA



instead of actual leadership relations. So the subject of interest is the style of a LCA relationship.<sup>8</sup>

## **Leadership in Rural Communities: The Framework of Analysis**

### ***Village communities in China***

As around 60% of the Chinese population live in rural communities,<sup>9</sup> an in-depth examination of the role of leader-follower relations in the countryside is essential for a better understanding of Chinese politics. We first need to know what a rural village is in China. Currently there are approximately 700,000 villages in the country. From a 2003 national random sample,<sup>10</sup> an average village is composed of 1436 individual persons as well as 392 households. Among those households, 57% of them were practicing full-time farming. The average net per capita income of the year is 1832 RMB yuan (\$223 in the 2003 exchange ratio). About 11% of the sample villages reported they owned at least one enterprise.

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<sup>8</sup> Strictly speaking, until the actual formation of a leader-follower relationship, a citizen-elite dyad should not be called the follower and the leader. As LCA is an antecedent to the leadership relationship, individuals engaged in a LCA relation are not necessarily leaders and follower; they are, putting in an accurate way, *potential* leaders and followers. But in this research, for convenience, I label elites and masses who are involved in a LCA relationship as leaders and followers; the style of LCA as leadership style.

<sup>9</sup> See “China's Rural Population Expected to be under 25 Percent: Economist.” *People's Daily (Renmin Ribao)*, May 19, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Data are from the 2003 Poverty and Development in Rural China Survey, conducted by the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy, the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

According to the Chinese constitution, the village is not a level of the state administration, but a “mass self-governing organization.” Yet in all sense the village acts as the lowest administrative unit in the rural part of China. The village committee and party branch are responsible for almost all public issues in the locality: enforcing upper-level policy, collecting taxes, recruiting party members, making budget plans, organizing public construction projects, providing public services, mediating disputes among villagers, maintaining social order, and so forth.

The governing body in the village is bifurcated: both the party branch and the village committee are in charge. The village party branch is the grassroots cell of the Communist Party, usually composed of a branch secretary, a deputy secretary, and a couple of members in charge of organization and propaganda. The village committee is supposed the self-governing body of the village, consisting of a chief, one or more associate chiefs, an accountant, and perhaps several more members in charge of issues like family planning and social order. In practice, the distinction between the two “committees” is rather blurred. During my field work, I found in all villages I visited the two committees were highly overlapped in personnel. Usually the village chief assumed the deputy secretary in the party branch and other village committee members were also members of the party branch.

Before the late of 1980s both the party branch and the village committee were appointed from above. In 1987 the National Congress passed the trial version of the *Organic Law*

*of Village Committee*, which suggested promoting popular elections of the village committee members. In 1998 the *Organic Law* became an official law, requiring all village committees must be popularly elected by village residents and the candidate nomination process must be open to all voters. Since then in almost all villages peasants have been enfranchised to elect their village committee members. In the meantime, the party branch members are still appointed by the upper-level party.<sup>11</sup> And in an overwhelming majority of villages, the party secretary is till the “leadership core” and the elected village chief usually plays as the “second-in-command.”

There is a collective ownership in the village. All land and some production means are owned by the collective and allocated to each household. Since 1990s villages began to run their own enterprises and other business. Profits from those enterprises or business are legally owned by the collective and practically controlled by village cadres.

### ***The framework of analysis***

Studies of peasant villages have revealed that this type of community is essentially different from urban communities or from rural communities in industrialized societies.

First, the village is largely a self-sufficient network of human relations, and the residents

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<sup>11</sup> In some places political experiments were conducted to subject the party branch to a certain form of popular vote. For example, in some Shanxi villages, people tried a two ballot-system to select party branch members. First, all villagers participated in a “vote of confidence” to single out candidates from all party members in the village. Then the party members or the upper-level party selected branch members from those candidates who passed the vote of confidence (Li, 1999). So far there is no sign that these experiments will become regular practices all over the country.

are dependent upon the village world. Unlike in a city, where social functions, such as production, recreation, and religious communion, are undertaken by different occupational groups, in the village all major functions are provided by the same collective. Each person is “dependent on the village for his status, his access to production, his share of the surplus, his social and personal security, his place in the world.” Under such circumstances, the characteristics of the village community have a “tremendous predictive power for the individual’s behavior” (Greer, 1955:45; 44).

In this self-contained social network, the leader-follower relationship may be embedded at the center, connecting each individual villagers and cadres physically or psychically. The formation and styles of these dyadic connections are substantially determined by political and economic features that determine the nature of village social networks. Comparing a village focusing on traditional farming with a village engaged extensively in international trade, we would see significantly different leadership relationship and styles. Also comparing a village during the late Imperial period when the state seldom interfered in village issues with a village in the Maoist era when the Communist state machine was trying to absorb every cell of the society into a gigantic leviathan, we would see different types of village leadership. The association between contextual factors and leadership is not a new topic in the leadership literature, but very little studies understand this question from the perspective of the relational approach, that is, regarding leadership as a social relationship; even less address how contextual factors in peasant villages influence political leadership. In Chapter III “Community

Characteristics and Leadership,” a detailed discussion of the relationship between village community and leadership is presented.

Another important aspect that distinguishes Chinese villages from other types of community is villages in China are experiencing dramatic political and economic change, from a “system of solidarity” to a “system of interest.” A system of solidarity is oriented towards egalitarian aims within a community (Pizzorno, 1966, cited in Negrelli, 1992:202). In such a community people share values, traditions, beliefs, and commitments to a common end. Individual objectives are congruent with the common goal and individual initiatives to pursue self-interests are discouraged, if not prohibited. In contrast, a system of interest is based on divergent interests of actors. People’s values and beliefs are diversified; the common end is replaced by multiple individual goals. Individuals are encouraged to pursue their particular interests. Simply speaking, in the system of solidarity, “cooperation in the realization of a common end prevails;” in the system of interest, “competition between divergent interests prevails” (Panebianco, 1988:18).

Since late 1970s, the Chinese government’s been promoting free market economy in the countryside. In the meantime, new structures of governance have been established. These reforms are pushing villages to transform from isolated traditional peasant communities to open industrialized communities. What is the impact of this transformation on local mass-elite relations? What is the role of leadership connections

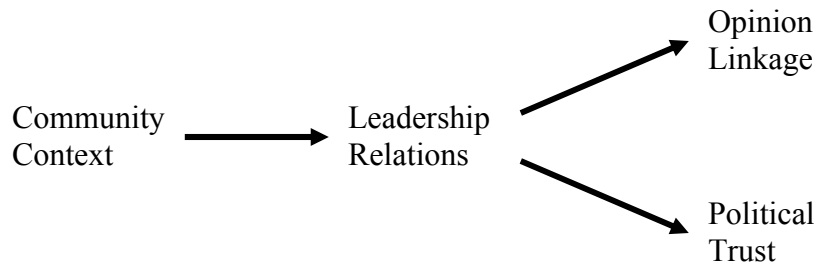
in this process? In the traditional community of solidarity, the cohesion between peasants and village cadres were achieved through shared values and the common goal. Their mutual influence on policy opinions and mutual trust were based on these cohesive connections. As villages are in the transition to systems of interest, and as common values and ends tend to collapse, the traditional solidarity cannot glue the mass and elites together any more. In such situation, I contend, leadership, as an informal social relationship, is an important resource through which to affect connections between villagers and cadres. In two aspects I make further exploration.

Chapter IV, “Leadership and Mass-Elite Linkage,” examines how leadership could affect the formation of agreement between citizen and cadre opinions. As we’ve discussed, leadership is an interpersonal influence process without appealing to formal authority and coercion. During the transition to more interest-based and pluralistic communities, this influence process plays as a significant role in molding mass-elite congruence in villages. If a cadre is recognized by villagers as a leader, she can shape villagers’ opinions of policy issues through leadership relations. This effect may even compete with congruence from formal institutions, for example, elections. Chapter IV argues that controlling the impact of elections, leadership still matters in forming mass-elite concordance.

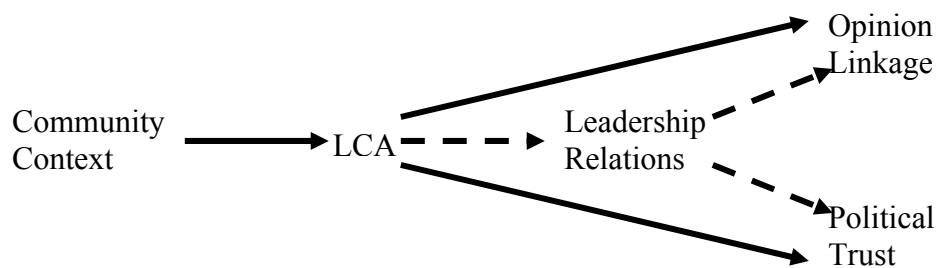
Another effect of leadership relations is how they influence villagers’ attitudes toward cadres, which is addressed in Chapter V, “Leadership and Political Trust.” In a system

of solidarity, peasants trust their local rulers because they share values, beliefs, life experience, and strive for a common objective. As the community is collapsing into a system of interest, what provide the sources of political trust? Why villagers still trust those cadres when they do not share values and beliefs and their interests are in competition? Existing studies summarized several sources of trust, such as government's job performance, a culture of trust, and democratic elections. Chapter V contends that after controlling those factors, leadership plays an important role in the formation of trust. Local cadres who are involved in leadership relations with villagers are more likely to be perceived as trustworthy by villagers than non-leader cadres. Leadership has such an effect because as a social relationship, it is a high-quality relationship based on mutual trust, respect, and obligations between leaders and followers.

As a summary, the analysis framework of this dissertation can be illustrated in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: The Framework of Analysis**

However, as we've already been aware of, currently we have no way to directly measure leadership relations. Instead of dealing with the leader-follower relationship itself, this research focuses on one important aspect of the leadership formation process: LCA. Existing literature on the categorization theory has revealed that LCA affects leadership relation. Does LCA have an impact on opinion linkage and political trust between general masses and political elites, as shown in the solid lines in figure 2.3?

**Figure 2.3: The Framework of Analysis (Revised)**



In figure 2.3, those relations indicated as dashed lines cannot be tested empirically since we cannot measure leadership relations directly. But we can test the associations illustrated as solid lines. Are there any theoretical justifications for the connections between LCA and opinion linkage or trust? LCA is an agreement between masses and officials regarding leadership. This agreement or congruence can be very meaningful for other dimensions of mass-elite relations. Scholars have found that dyadic agreement between a superior and a member is positively related to the quality of their relationship (Pulakos and Wexley, 1983). Partners of an interpersonal dyad tend to be attracted to each other based on similarity of attitudes and beliefs (Sosik et al., 2004). Their agreement regarding “the meaning of certain mutually experienced events and situations will co-vary with the quality of their dyadic interdependencies” (Graen and Schiemann, 1978:206). Furthermore, mass-elite congruence not only leads to a high quality of their relations, but also to certain political behavior. “The degree of similarity has implications for such varied topics as resource allocation, policy implementation, norms of reciprocity and trust, conflict resolution, and political representation” (Jennings, 2003).

Based on these studies, I believe it is reasonable to posit congruence on leadership expectation and supplies also result in a high-quality mass-elite relationship and certain political behavior. For example, LCA may enhance the leader’s influence on the follower’s policy opinion, as well as facilitate the follower’s belief that the leader is trustworthy.

From the next chapter on, I am going to discuss detailed theoretical frameworks regarding leadership and community context, mass-elite opinion linkages, and political trust. Empirical analysis follows each theoretical model.

### ***The time period of the study***

In a broad sense, this research addresses politics in Chinese villages from 1979 to present, which is usually termed as “the reform era.” During these more than two decades, the Communist government has promoted extensive political and economic reform throughout the country. The previous totalitarian system was substantially dismantled and the regime has been in transition to a more market-oriented and more open one. In the countryside, the former collective-production communes were taken place by the household responsibility system. The once omnipotent village party secretary has to accommodate and learn to cooperate with an elected village chief. As more and more peasants are involved in market activities, less and less of them still stick to traditional cropping. A huge proportion of rural labors move to cities for a better living. All these changes have fundamentally reshuffled mass-elite relations in the countryside. For a social scientist who is interested in social and political changes, this time period provide an unusual opportunity to examine one of the most fundamental and rapid changes in today’s world.

The quantitative analyses in this research are mostly focused on two years: 1990 and 1996, or changes between these two years. These two years are selected, of course, due

partially to a practical reason: the survey data used in the analyses were collected in the two years. Nevertheless, there is a more important reason. That is, these two time points grasp a time period when a major shift in mass-elite relations in the countryside took place. From 1980s to 1990s, the cadre-villager relations in the rural grassroots experienced a deteriorating process. In 1980s, the communist central government initiated political and economic reforms in the countryside. Villagers benefited from those reforms. In that decade, there was a kind of “honeymoon” relationship between peasants and the local state. However, in early 1990s, the center employed several radical industrialization programs with an intention of a rapid rural modernization. For instance, since 1994 government encouraged all rural communities to establish their own township-and-village enterprises (Oi, 1999). Most of those enterprises went bankrupted later and brought heavy debts to village communities. In the meantime, government attempted to enforce a set of regulations and policy tasks in the countryside, including family planning, agricultural taxes, grain procurement, and so forth. Those policies were very unpopular in the grassroots, which considerably undermined the relationship between local officials and villagers (see Bernstein and Lu, 2000; Lu, 1997). As a result, the honeymoon between officials and villagers was drawn to an end in early 1990s and mass-elite connections became increasingly antagonistic in the middle of 1990s. The two-year quantitative data cover information right before and after the transition of mass-elite relations. This provides a favorable condition to systematically track changes in many dimensions and to study their relationships.

### CHAPTER III

#### COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND LEADERSHIP

This chapter examines how the economic and political reforms in China reshape leadership relations in rural communities. The last three decades have witnessed how the reform has changed the politico-economic landscape of the Chinese countryside. Market economy has more and more taken root in the rural area; many farmers shifted into cash cropping, making profits in free market. Growth in non-farm employment, rural industry, and the migration of large amount of rural labors into urban area are playing key roles in the nation's modernization. Since 1987 the Communist government has taken considerable efforts to promote village self-government, at the center of which is the competitive elections of village administrators. How these changes influence one of the most important informal social relations in the village community, leadership?

It is not new in the leadership literature that contextual factors have substantial impacts on the relationship between the leader and the follower. This chapter focuses on one type of contextual factors, the modes of governance in communities, to address the association between social change and leadership change. Empirical findings shall reveal that after controlling other factors of significance, the changing governance modes towards market economy and bureaucratic control have an important impact on the emergence of leader-follower relationship and a certain type of leadership, fraternal leadership.

## **Context and Leadership**

Recent development in leadership theory suggests that leadership is an “emerging social process produced by the interaction of a variety of factors, including context, tasks, group histories, and the personal qualities of leaders and followers” (Lord, et al., 2001:312). The effects of context have received considerable attention in the academics. As Perrow pointed out more than 30 years ago, “leadership style is a dependent variable which depends on something else. The setting or task is the independent variable” (1970:6). Researchers have explored the relationship between leadership and contextual factors. Those contextual factors include characteristics of small groups and their task as micro-level contingency factors (identified by earlier contingency theorists), and characteristics of social systems or national culture at macro level (identified by more recent studies). For instance, Shamir and Howell (1999) contended that micro-level contextual variables such as organizational tasks, goals, and structure affect the emergence and effectiveness of charismatic leadership. “Charismatic leadership is more likely to emerge and be effective in dynamic environments that require and enable the introduction of new strategies, markets, products and technologies” (1999:9). At the macro level, Jung and Avolio (1999) indicated that people from Eastern cultures are more responsive to transformational leadership than people from Western cultures.

At the organizational level, Katz found that in a hierarchically structured organization (i.e., a political party or bureaucracy), different levels require different leadership

orientations and behavior (1973:211-15). Harmel and Svasand (1993) advanced this argument in their research on political parties. They revealed that different leadership needs exist at different stages of party development. Leaders who lack the required skills and/or orientations for a certain stage tend to be replaced or complemented by others in order to avoid organizational failure and eventual collapse.

A common theme of these researches is that by learning about the context in which leadership is occurring, we can understand the nature of the leadership. The environmental context provides demands, constraints, and choices for leaders and followers (Panebianco, 1988; Hermann, 1986). Eventually, differences in environmental background lead to different types of leader or leadership behavior. The contextual approach is especially important in studying political leadership in social transformation. By examining the connection between contextual factors and leadership, we can explore the process how economic and political transitions remold the informal personal interactions between the leader and the led. In China, a nice starting point for this research is to examine where the state meets the society: rural communities.

Unfortunately, while there are a few studies dealing with community leadership (e.g. Presthus, 1964; Dahl, 1961), leadership in rural communities has been largely left out. Differing from settings such as small work groups, industrial organizations, and national culture, what are important contextual factors in a rural community, and how do those factors influence leader-follower interactions? As a step toward addressing these

questions, in the subsequent sections, I provide a framework to conceptualize rural community environment and leadership as well as empirical analysis.

### **Conceptualizing the Changing Context of Village Communities**

As we've discussed in the previous chapter, in this research we study Leadership Category Agreement as a surrogate of leadership relation. If a target official matches a citizen's prototypes, that official is likely to be viewed as a leader and rated accordingly.

Recent work on leadership categorization has revealed that the cognitive structure of prototypes is not steadfast; on the contrary, it is largely a function of the changing environment. Lord and Smith (1999) found that both followers' leadership prototypes and leaders' behaviors are products of a larger system of factors. "Social system factors activate relevant perceptual constructs in followers, and relevant behavioral tendencies in leaders, and through this process, embed leadership in a flexible task and social system" (Lord et al., 2001:312). Leadership prototypes may be generated as a response to or adjusted to various requirements of different contexts, tasks, structure, or culture of a group, organization or community. Lord and Maher (1991) found that a perceiver's evaluation of a prototype in a given situation may be moderated by what requirements a task type imposes on the leader. Analyzing categorization as a process that neuron-like units "integrate information from input sources and pass on the resulting activation to connected (output) units" (2001:314), Lord and his colleagues indicated that if the

external situation is a crisis, the perceiver's internal nodes associated with crisis managing are likely to be activated. On the contrary, if the external situation is a routine task, internal nodes associated with daily operation are likely to be activated. Thus, being in different contexts may create substantially different leadership expectations and perceptions.

In short, LCA is formed from the congruence or match between the behavior of a target person and a prototype. And prototypes are influenced by contextual factors. A target individual who is apt to flexibly adapt his or her behavior to the demands of different situations will more likely be viewed as a leader. In this research, I am interested in studying how changing contextual factors in rural communities influence LCA, and thus the emergence of leadership relations. What kinds of factors matter in a village community?

As we are studying the impact of political economic transformation on community leadership, we focus on one important aspect of community context: the predominant mode of governance or control in the community. Three methods of governance are identified in literature: market, bureaucracy, and clan (Ouchi, 1980). Shamir and Howell summarized the definitions of the three modes as follows (1999:270):

In the market mode of governance, activities are regulated by market or price mechanisms... In the bureaucratic mode of governance, control and coordination



depend on rules, policies, hierarchy of authority, standardization, written communication, and other mechanisms to standardize behavior and assess performance... The third mode of governance, clan control, involves the use of shared values, traditions, beliefs, and commitments to control behavior... When members' activities are guided by the same values and beliefs they are more likely to cooperate with each other, coordinate their mutual activities, trust each other, and demonstrate commitment to the organization.

As Pawar and Eastman point out, these modes of governance are not structural arrangements of an organization or community (1997:96). While structural arrangements focus on formal roles, responsibilities, and communicative mechanisms of group members, modes of governance emphasize a set of values shared by members. Those values are important because they determine an individual's preferred outcomes and means of action and thus, they are internalized, deep-in-mind driving forces of people's behavior. These driving forces may influence individual's leadership prototypes or categorization behavior. For instance, scholars have suggested that transformational or charismatic leadership is more likely to emerge in organizations with a clan mode of governance than with other modes of governance (Shamir and Howell, 1999; Pawar and Eastman, 1997)

In the Chinese villages in the past 30 years, changes have taken places in two dimensions. The first dimension of change is from a clan mode to a market mode of

governance. Villages have been getting more and more open to outside social and economic resources, and more and more involved in market activities. The other dimension of change is from a clan mode of governance to a bureaucratic mode of governance. Villages have been more and more incorporated into a national bureaucratic system, and village issues have been more and more interfered by the state. Transformations in these two dimensions is not only restructuring the market-community and state-community relations, but also reshaping village residents' values about their preferred political economic outcomes and ways of action, and thus leadership relations in the countryside.

### ***From clan mode to market mode of governance***

Governance in a traditional village can be characterized as a clan form. According to Ouchi, "clan" here is referring to an association which "resembles a kin network but may not include blood relations" (1980:132). In a community with a clan culture, individual objectives are congruent with collective goals. Individual initiatives to pursue self-interests are discouraged, if not prohibited. The sense of community is so strong that individuals have no much autonomy in determining one's own preferred outcomes or behavior modes. Disciplines within the community are not achieved through contractual legal system or surveillance, but through the prevalent belief that personal interests are best served by pursuing the interests of the whole community (Kanter, 1972:41). This type of community can also be termed as Max Weber's closed corporate community.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Max Weber defines a social relationship as "open" to outsiders "if and in so far as

In a closed community with clan style governance, peasants practice intensive planting and cropping with traditional technology based on manual labor. Production is largely isolated from fluid capital and outside market (Wolf, 1955:456, 457). Collective property rights are the more popular form of property rights in the community.

Members are made co-owners of village land and other important production resources, which makes the community looks like a corporation (Appell, 1983; Wolf, 1955:457).

In addition, there are a set of internal institutionalized norms and mores and a norm-enforcing group of elites (Dow, 1973:905).

In villages, local elites' primary duty is to defend local culture, values, and norms.

Defense of this culture maintains the solidarity and stability of such communities. They usually behave like benign patriarchies, ruling the village like a father taking care of his family. So village heads are rarely outsiders of the community. While their appointments may need to get approval by the state, their positions are mostly internally created. Since both elites and villagers share values and objectives in such a

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participation in the mutually oriented social action relevant to its subjective meaning is...not denied to anyone who wishes to participate and who is actually in a position to do so." A closed relationship is "according to its subjective meaning and the binding rules of its order, participation of certain persons is excluded, limited or subjected to conditions" (1947:127). In the Chinese countryside, the story is going along another direction: a social relationship is open if participants of the relationship are not denied to involve social activities outside the relationship. The concept of closed corporate community is defined as "social relationship which is either closed or limits the admission of outsiders by rules, will be called a 'corporate group' so far as its order is enforced by the action of specific individuals whose regular function is of a chief or head and usually also an administrative staff" (1947:133).

homogeneous community, it is reasonable to posit it is relatively easy for local heads behavior to match villagers' leadership prototypes. That is, leadership emerges more likely than other types of communities.

Villages with a market mode of governance are quite different. Cooperation among community members are not achieved through shared values, but through transactions in the market place. "The transaction takes place between the two parties and is mediated by a price mechanism in which the existence of a competitive market reassures both parties that the terms of exchange are equitable" (Ouchi, 1980:130). There are no congruence between individual goals and collective objectives anymore. Members are substantially independent of the community. They determine their own life style and means to achieve it. They are encouraged to pursue self-interests, making profits with their own labors. Individual initiatives in business and entrepreneurship are highly praised and respected.

In compared with a closed corporate community, the second type of village is an open community. Peasants practice cash cropping to meet demands of the outside market. They may receive external resources to invest on the production, which makes them remain interested in the outside world and tie their fortunes to exterior needs. Although there may be still collective property rights, individual efforts to accumulate wealth are permitted or even encouraged. Local values and moral norms in this type of community

are relatively diverse and less important than that in corporate villages in maintaining the solidarity of the community (Wolf, 1955; Skinner, 1971).

Not surprisingly, elites in the open community are not so much defenders of local culture as those in clan form of control. They are expected to act as communicators between the localities and the external world. Although leaders lose the authority to review and revise individual decisions as their counterparts do in closed communities, they reestablish their authority through bringing exterior information and resources and promoting local produce and products in the world market. To do this, they need to have knowledge and skills to communicate with outside world and guide people make fortune, which usually means more open-minded and more entrepreneurial abilities.

In the village with a market mode of governance, if both elites and masses are fully involved in market activities and are equally entrepreneurial-oriented, there is a pretty high chance of the match between villagers' leadership categories and the target elite's behavior. However, if the village is during the course of transition from the clan mode to market mode, then values and views about market transaction must be very heterogeneous. Some people are more open-minded and want to pursue personal interests while others may still prefer the old fashioned community life. Under such situation, it is difficult for a village head to be extensively perceived as a leader by her fellow villagers.

***From clan mode to bureaucratic mode of governance***

Villages with a clan mode of governance can also be characterized as communities with weak state penetration. Researchers of peasant communities have revealed that the transformation from a traditional community to a modern one is a process of increasing interference from the state. In the traditional, corporate-like villages, internal issues are largely handled within the community. The only time peasants come in direct contact with the state is when taxes have to be paid or when a serious crime is committed in the village (Yang, 1945). The village polity protects its interest against neighboring villages and other outsiders, maintains its internal peace and security, and prevents the state's overexploitation (Befu, 1967:612). The clan form of governance is essentially self-governance of the village, making the village independent from the national bureaucratic system.

Governing officials in the village with weak state penetration are usually selected by their communities rather than appointed by the state. Their legitimacy is largely based on community tradition, culture, and norms, not on the authorization of the state (Weber, 1968). The bureaucratic hierarchy of the state ceases at some level above the village. The state has to rely on the traditional and indigenous power structure of the village in articulating itself (Li, 2003). Therefore, when village heads have to encounter the state, they behave like a representative of the locality, instead of an agent from above.

In contrast, in villages with a bureaucratic mode of governance, the cooperation of members depends on “a social agreement that the bureaucratic hierarchy has the legitimate authority to provide this mediation” (Ouchi, 1980:130). The village must be part of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Surveillance is conducted through formalized monitoring and specified contract by the state apparatus. That is why the modern state always attempts to bring village community into the national fold through land reforms, development programs, public health, or personnel appointment. The government begins to affect more and more areas of life, gradually replacing the traditional political structure of the village with a structure of bureaucracy. As governmental officials exercise more and more power in village life, the local autonomy is gradually enfeebled (Befu, 1967:615-618). The village community thus becomes incorporated into the bureaucratic structure of the national government. As a result, the state is no longer satisfied with giving approval to the villagers’ selection of their heads. It now attempts to impose a whole set of political offices on villages and change community officials into local state agents, whose offices are extensions of the state bureaucracy and legal system, and whose recruitment to the offices are decided by the state (Befu, 1967:616).

For village elites, when they are internally selected within communities, and when they behave autonomously from the state machine under the clan mode of governance, they are more likely to share values or views with their villagers. When village officials are appointed and sent by the state government, and behave as a branch of the national bureaucracy, they don’t have to pay attention to villagers’ values or views. They only

need to follow the instructions of their superiors within the bureaucratic system. Hence it is reasonable to posit that elites in the clan mode of control more likely emerge as leaders than those local bureaucrats.

## **Changing Village Communities in China**

### ***From clan mode to market mode of governance***

The past three decades have witnessed the Chinese villages being transformed from clan form of control to market form of control. During Maoist period, rural communities were organized into the People's Commune system through collectivization movement. A commune (which is equivalent to today's town or township) was composed of production teams (equivalent to today's natural village or small group) in which all peasants were members. An extreme type of collective property rights existed in the commune. All land, machines, stools, utilities, and livestock were collective owned. The production team was not only the basic unit of accounting and production, but also the community administration in charge of almost all spheres of peasant life, such as public services, education, healthcare, social security, military training, and so forth (Oi, 1989). According to Vivian Shue, the commune system demonstrated a pattern of "honeycomb," which was highly localized, self-sufficient, particularized, and cell-like (1988). This is a strong version of closed corporate community with a clan mode of governance.



The marketized reform after 1979 provides peasants with a way out from the closed corporate village within the commune system (Oi, 1989:226). Rapid expansion of market relations in economy, society, and the very work of local government have shaken both the closed corporate structure and the morality of localism. Although the collective still remains ownership of major means of production—land, factories, and large equipment, the basic farming unit is now the peasant household, which undermined the corporate nature of the village community as a central unit of social life (Oi, 1990:16). Peasants are being reorganized into collective business or individual producers that operate for profit and deal with all outside suppliers and customers. Village cultures are becoming less socially homogenous, and therefore less solidarity as in the clan form of governance. Villagers are more and more divided by divergent interests (Shue, 1988:148).

As the cell-like communities were being substituted by new web-like ones (as they following the “natural” networks of commercial exchange between city and countryside), the demands for leadership have been in change. While leaders are not in charge of the ultimate decision for production, sales, and distribution, they are expected to act as an even more crucial role in local economic development (Oi, 1992; Lin, 1995; Nee, 1992; Walder, 1996). Cash cropping and industrial business urged local cadres and villagers to look beyond the local boundaries for opportunities and interests. Rural leaders must be very aggressive now seeking resources such as labors, materials, finance, and markets (Lin, 1995:344; Shue, 1988:148-49).

*From clan mode to bureaucratic mode of governance*

Conventional wisdom believes that the Chinese villages had already been successfully incorporated into a totalitarian state which controls practically every sphere of peasant life (e.g., Befu, 1967:617). If this is true, then the state penetration in the Chinese villages has remained strong since the Maoist revolution succeeded in 1949. But some scholars challenged this idea, arguing that even in the Maoist era, state power had been weakened and compromised by the forces of localism or the clan form of control. Local cadres often acted as much the state agent as the protector of their communities against upper level penetration. Actually, it is the post-Mao reform, through rapid expansion of market relations that is shaking the structure of local autonomy under the clan mode of governance, that made the state power more efficiently extend to the grassroots (Shue, 1988). If this argument is supported, then the reform process in the past 20 years is one from weak state penetration to strong state penetration.

I argue for the latter point of view. I believe that the Maoist revolution failed to integrate the rural China into a modern state, leaving a lot of pre-modern elements in the political and economic structure of villages. First, kinship is politically salient. Although before the reform lineage groups seemed disappeared under the totalitarian control, they have recovered very rapidly and played an important role (as what they did before the revolution) in local governance (Tsai, 2001). It turns out that their influence was just temporarily suppressed. It is increased mobility of rural labors stimulated by the marketized transformation that separates kinsmen from one another geographically

as well as socially. Second, communal ownership of subsistence resources, which extensively existed in imperial China and all other traditional societies, was not weakened but crystallized by the people's commune system. It is the post-Mao reform that has assigned individual peasant households partial ownership over some production means (Oi, 1990). Finally, the Maoist village was economically self-sufficient and culturally isolated and parochial. It is the market economy and rapid industrialization that create an exchange system of much wider scope based on interdependence between villages and cities and between regions. Apparently, under the Maoist state, the commune and production teams were parts of the state apparatus, and commune and team officials were supposed to be loyal to their superiors in the bureaucracy. However, the survival of above pre-modern socioeconomic structures "become a maze of power pockets and vested interests manned by people who were constrained to mouth the rhetoric of revolution but who often had everything to gain by protecting and elaborating on the status quo. These stubborn, savvy, and often cynical local officials came to constitute a formidable obstacle to real and effective central penetration and control on the ground" (Shue, 1988:130, 131).

Two changes in the Deng reform have facilitated the government to penetrate into the village and influence its internal activities. The first is the breakdown of localist village polity resulting from the extinct of the commune system and the formation of wide-scale economic interdependence. With the onslaught of urbanization and industrialization, self-sufficient natural economy was being swept away and replaced by multiple interest

groups and secondary groupings based on occupations, vocations, and other voluntary organizations (Lin, 1995:344). As the entrenched power pockets were broken down, the local cell-wall boundaries have become rather porous and weak in faced with state penetration strengthened by continuous economic growth and more advanced public policy leverages (Shue, 1988:131-132).

Another change that has promoted state penetration is that the party-state has been successful in transforming its political control from direct command to a state corporatist style. According to the literature of “local corporatism” (Oi, 1989; Walder, 1990; Nee, 1992), I contend that because of market-oriented reforms, the Leninist local state has moved towards a mixed form of governance appropriate to an industrial economy consisting of both private and collectively owned businesses. There are three characteristics of this corporatist governance. First, it encourages private efforts in both industrial and profitable agricultural business. Second, the local government remains control in critical political and economic resources, such as, licensing, land use permit, personnel appointment in villages and business associations, etc., in order to constrain the marketized sector from being independent (Oi, 1999). Third, the state keeps its resource-extracting capability through imposing a set of regulations on rural communities, such as tax, informal charges, and grain procurement (Lu, 1997; Bernstein and Lu, 2000).

Thus, the penetration of the party-state into peasant communities has been enhanced during the reform from a command system to a state corporatist system. During this process, the local party branch plays a central role. Although there are widespread reports of difficulties in new member recruitment in rural areas (Baum and Shevchenko, 1999:343), although the majority of villages have held popular elections for the village committee since 1987, in my field interviews in 2003 and 2004, I still found that in 11 out of 12 villages, it was the party branch acts as the leadership core and the elected village committee is at most an executive assistant. A major strategy employed by the party branch to control the village administration is personnel interlocking, that is, the overlapping of party personnel and village administrative staff.

### **Empirical Analysis and Findings**

Based on the above discussion, we can examine empirically how the changes going along in the Chinese village communities influence LCA, and hence the occurrence and style of leadership.

The dependent variable, *LCA*, is measured on the basis of the leadership categorization theory. As we've known, LCA increases the likelihood of leadership relation; and it is a function of community context. In the four-county survey, the mass respondents were asked a multiple-choice question, "what kind of person you think a leading cadre ought

to be.”<sup>13</sup> Each respondent made choices among eight roles: patriarch, friend, teacher, pupil, protector, mediator, vanguard, and representative of interests.<sup>14</sup> These items are used as measures of leadership prototypes of the mass respondents.

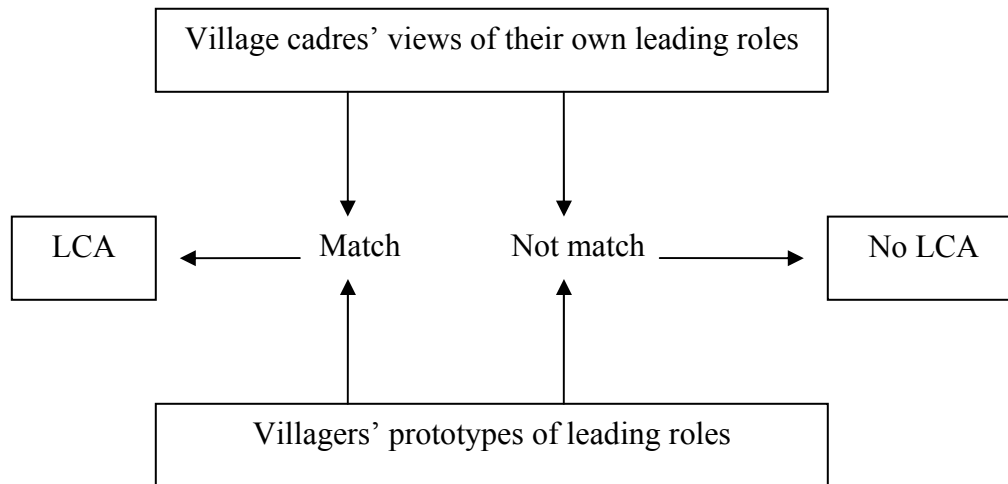
Ideally, we should have information of the mass perception of their local officials’ behavior or opinions, to see if these perceptions match their leadership prototypes. In the absence of such information, I use cadres’ views of their own leading roles as a proxy. For elite respondents, they were asked “how do you see your relations with the people” and also selected answers among the same eight categories as those in the villager questionnaire.<sup>15</sup> For each villager-cadre dyad, a leadership score is created by calculating to what extent the leader categories identified by the cadre in that village match those selected by the villager. The basic logic is shown in the following diagram:

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<sup>13</sup> The codebook for the 1990 Four-County Study of Chinese Local Government and Political Economy survey is available at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>. The codebook for the 1996 study has yet to be publicized. The items referred to here are M3020 through M3027 in 1990 and M3010 in 1996.

<sup>14</sup> In 1990, each respondent selected three out of the eight roles; in 1996 each of them selected one out of the eight roles.

<sup>15</sup> The items referred to here are C5040 through C5047 in 1990 and C5030 in 1996. In 1990, each respondent selected three out of the eight roles; in 1996 each of them selected one out of the eight roles.

**Figure 3.1: Measuring Leadership Category Agreement**

To have a LCA score comparable across 1990 and 1996, we first create a *leader style score* for both elites and masses. In the previous chapter two types of leader style are defined: paternal and fraternal leaders. Each of the eight roles identified by village cadres and villagers is coded as one of the two values: patriarch, teacher, protector, and vanguard are assumed to be paternal-oriented and coded as “-1;” whereas, friend, pupil, mediator, and representative of interests are assumed to be fraternal leader styles and coded as “1.” In the 1996 data, we recode the “-1” into “0” in order to get a dummy variable. In the 1990 data, since each respondent selected three categories, for each respondent, these values are added up and the sum is divided by 3. Then the results are dichotomized into a dummy variable with values no less than zero as “1” and values smaller than zero as “0.” Through this procedure we obtain a leader style score. For

village officials, the score refers to their self-identified leader style; for village residents, it refers to how they perceive the leader style of their local cadres. The larger the score, the more fraternal the leader style is.

Now we can measure how much mass respondents match their cadres in terms of leader style score. A dummy variable of *LCA* is generated. The variable is valued “1” if a villager’s leader style score equals the one of the correspondent village head and valued “0” if otherwise. For instance, if both a villager and her village head are scored a paternal leader style, we say there is a match between a mass respondent’s leadership prototypes and a cadre’s self-perceived leading roles, and then the cadre is likely to be perceived as a leader by that mass respondent. If there is a non-zero score between an elite and a citizen, then we know there is a *LCA* relation existing between the two. If the score is zero, there is not a leadership linkage between the elite and the citizen.

We are not only interested in the determinants of *LCA* or leadership relations, also interested in what factors contribute to a certain style of leadership, say, fraternal leadership. So another dependent variable is created, *fraternal LCA*. This is the product of leader style score and *LCA*, where “1” a fraternal leadership and “0” means other situations.

In the analysis, both dependent variables are aggregated at the village level by calculating the ratio of the number of “1” to total non-missing values in a village, that is,



the percentage of mass-elite dyads in each village involved in LCA relations or fraternal leadership relations. Table 3.1 reports the distribution of LCA relations in 1990 and 1996.

**Table 3.1: The Distribution of LCA and Fraternal-Styled LCA**

	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
1996 LCA	57	.4949231	.2760691	.0555556	1
1990 LCA	58	.5521381	.2679144	.0588235	.9375
1996 Fraternal LCA	57	.0997848	.1225478	0	.3636364
1990 Fraternal LCA	58	.1040015	.159397	0	.6153846

We expect that during the transition from the clan mode to the market mode of governance, the homogeneity of village residents' market orientations is positively related to emergence of leadership relations. If both elites and ordinary residents are involved in market activities and both are driven by individual initiatives to pursue prosperity, it is not difficult for them to share values or preferences. Thus village officials are likely to be viewed as leaders by their fellow villagers. If, however, the market orientations in the village are very heterogeneous, some are involved in business in the free market a lot while others are still in the traditional farming, then values and

preferences in the village are very diverse. Villagers' leadership prototypes tend to become heterogeneous accordingly. As a result, cadres less likely emerge as leaders than those cadres in a homogenous community.

On the other hand, we expect the homogeneity of market orientations is negatively related to the formation of fraternal leadership. In a closed corporate community, village heads are protectors of local values and usually rule like an authoritative father in an extended family. So their leader style is mostly paternal. In a completely open community with a dominant market mode of control, village cadres are usually in charge of village enterprises and taking a leadership role in soliciting investment, fiscal management, and marketing. As Oi points out (1996), they control most crucial economic resources in the village. So they can also rule in an authoritative and arbitrary way. Only in a village during the transitional process from a closed to open one, when the traditional patriarchy is declining and the new governance based on economic dominance is still under construction, leaders are the least likely to be authoritative and paternal. In such a village with heterogeneous values and preferences, leaders do not have an authority base either from traditional values or from the control of economic resources. Simply speaking, in a transitional and thus heterogeneous village, leaders have no enough resources to be paternal.

Two variables are used to measure the change in market orientations of village communities in the reform era. *Individual initiative*, which is the ratio of two scales:

importance of individual initiative to get rich and importance of government management of economy to bring about prosperity.<sup>16</sup> The larger the ratio, the more the respondent is individualistic-oriented and believes the locus of responsibility for personal well-being lies in individual rather than the state or other collectives. This is a value prevalent in a marketized society. The second measure is *entrepreneurship*, which is whether the respondent is willing to spend most of their money to start a business if necessary.<sup>17</sup> In a traditional community where most people practice cropping or husbandry, people would not be interested in investing in a business with the intention of making profits in the free market. Only when the community is involved in activities in market, then people begin to develop their entrepreneurship. For each village I calculate the standard deviation of the variables. Large values of these two indicate a high level of heterogeneity in market orientations. I anticipate higher levels of heterogeneity are associated with lower occurrence of LCA and higher chance of fraternal leadership style.

The third variable to measure community characteristics is whether the village is in the clan mode or bureaucratic mode of governance, aka., the state-community relations. In a traditional community the state has very limited capacity to regulate its public issues. Ordinary residents would feel very little about the role of the state. Whereas, when a village is incorporated into a national bureaucratic system, governmental role will become much more notable and draw more attention from villagers. Here I

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<sup>16</sup>In the 1990 data the items are M5022 and M5020; in 1996 the items are M5011 and M5012.

<sup>17</sup> In the 1990 data the item is M5001; in 1996 it is M5001.

operationalize it as how much attention the villagers paid to government.<sup>18</sup> The assumption is that the more the state penetrates into village affairs, the more the residents think about government in their daily life. For each village I calculate the mean values of this measure. The more *attention to government*, the more state penetration, thus the more likely that a cadre behaves as state agent and in an authoritarian way.

In the analysis I use the change of these three variables from 1990 to 1996, i.e., subtracting the values in 1990 from those in 1996. The aim is to examine how the changes in market orientations and state penetration influence the formation of leadership and leadership style during the course of 1990 to 1996. Based on the above discussion, we have the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Increase in the standard deviation of individual initiative is negatively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 1a:** Increase in the standard deviation of individual initiative is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

**Hypothesis 2:** Increase in the standard deviation of entrepreneurship is negatively related to increase in LCA.

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<sup>18</sup> In the 1990 data the item is M3050; in 1996 it is M3040.

**Hypothesis 2a:** Increase in the standard deviation of entrepreneurship is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

**Hypothesis 3:** Increase in attention to government is negatively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 3a:** Increase in attention to government is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

In addition to the three explanatory variables, we also need to track the socioeconomic change in the communities. So in the model I include the change in average family income and average education levels of villagers from 1990 to 1996. Moreover, three other village level factors are controlled. The first one is kinship relations in village communities. Studies by Putnam (1993) and Levi (1996) have linked informal social networks to social trust and mass-elite connections. Scholars of the Chinese rural politics found that kinship networks are important resources for political competitions. For instance, Xiao (2001) revealed that most villagers vote for their own lineage and candidates from large lineages have a higher chance of winning offices in village elections. Tsai (2002) found that in multiple-surname villages the mass-elite relations tend to be conflicting. Further, Kennedy (2002) discovered that in villagers in villages with two or three large lineages are least satisfied with village elections. Since kinship relations have an influence on the interactions between ordinary citizens and local

officials, we need to control their effects. Following Manion (2006), I use *surname diversity* to measure lineage relations. It is computed from a random sample of surnames in the village.<sup>19</sup> Lower values represent greater surname concentration and higher values reflect greater surname diversity. There are data for 57 villages. Among all these 57, there are no single-surname villages. Small values of surname diversity suggest a few major lineages competing for power in a village, and thus strong influences in politics; whereas, large values suggest a high level of lineage fragmentation and a low level of influences on politics. As multiple surnames increase competition among cadres and conflicts between officials and villagers, we anticipate that this variable is negatively related to the emergence of LCA. In addition, a fragmented lineage structure decreases the chance that a certain leader is from a large lineage, thus decreases the political resources that the leader is able to employ to support his or her authority. So we expect there is a positive relationship between surname diversity and fraternal leadership.

**Hypothesis 4:** Surname diversity is negatively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 4a:** Surname diversity is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

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<sup>19</sup>For detailed coding of this variable, please see Manion, 2006:312-13.

Another important village level factor that could influence the formation of leadership relations is village elections. Competitive elections can affect leadership relations in two aspects. First, voters tend to elect those who are “similar” to them (Erikson, 1978:526). People prefer candidates who share their policy opinions, political attitudes, or personality. This suggests that people would also like to elect a leader, one whose behavior matches their leadership prototypes. Second, once a politician is in office, to maintain the position or to win over next election, the politician is likely to align his or her own opinions and behavior with what the constituency prefers, and thus produces agreement between officials and general voters (Verba and Nie, 1972). This may include adjusting an official’s behavior to match voters’ leadership categories. With these two aspects, we predict that contesting elections have a positive relationship with the formation of leader-follower agreement. The more competitive the election is, the more likely to find a LCA between the elected and the voters. In addition, elections also increase the likelihood of fraternal leadership. Electoral democracy promotes responsiveness of elected officials. The prospects of reelection plays as a monitoring mechanism, which pushes officials respect voters, listen to public demands and opinions. With this mechanism elected elite can hardly lead in an authoritarian style or like an arbitrary father. So we expect the levels of contestation have a positive relationship with the likelihood of fraternal style leadership. In the analysis, levels of *electoral competitiveness* are measured as the mean of the ratio of the number of candidates to that of positions on the village committee in elections from 1990 to 1996.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For detailed coding of this variable, please see Manion, 2006.

**Hypothesis 5:** Electoral competitiveness is positively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 5a:** Electoral competitiveness is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

Finally, the *population size* of villages is also controlled. As leadership is an interpersonal influence process, the larger the size of a community, the more difficult the members in that community develop a leader-follower relation with the community officials. So the expected relationship between population size and LCA or fraternal leadership is negative. In the analysis, the village population in 1990 is used.

**Hypothesis 6:** Village population size is negatively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 6a:** Village population size is negatively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

Though in this research we are interested in how contextual factors affect leadership, we need to take into consideration individual characteristics of cadres. According to our definition, LCA is a matching process between ordinary citizens and local officials. If those village-level factors have an impact on the leader prototypes of citizens, we need also consider how officials' individual characteristics influence their likelihood to match citizens. First the village cadre's family income and education levels are controlled.



These are measured as the difference of values between 1990 and 1996. Also, corresponding to those community level factors, the cadre's market orientations and relations with the state are included in the model. The coding process of *cadre entrepreneurial orientation and individual initiative* is the same as village level variable with minor revision<sup>21</sup>. We predict that the more market-oriented a cadre is, the less likely for her to emerge as a leader. Cadres with strong entrepreneurial values are more aggressive in profit-making and usually they are richer than their fellow villagers in the locality. The gap of income brings the inequality problem into mass-elite interactions. In addition, entrepreneurial cadres are usually running village enterprises or taking charge of economic management, which has provided them with great opportunities of rent-seeking. Corruption has become a predominant problem in the Chinese grassroots since 1990s. Combining these two together makes us believe that general villagers less likely to identify an entrepreneurial cadre as their leader. Some analysis demonstrates preliminary evidence.<sup>22</sup> For the second dependent variable, we posit a positive relationship between cadres' market orientations and emergence of fraternal leadership. Entrepreneurial village heads are forerunners in the village in the sense that they are the ones introducing new ideas, views, or ways of life into the village. They are usually

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<sup>21</sup> For individual initiative, the survey items are C3030, C031, and C3032 in 1990, and C3031 and C3032 in 1996. For entrepreneurship, the items are C3010 in 1990 and 1996. While for the village level variables, the standard deviation of each village is computed, for the cadre variable, the individual level values are used.

<sup>22</sup> In the 1996 data, there are slight, but significantly positive correlations between cadre entrepreneurship and villagers' belief that "some people get more than their fair share" and "cadres and officials get more than their fair share," and there is a slight, but significantly negative correlation between cadre entrepreneurship and mass villagers' feeling thermometer of local elite. In the 1990 data, there are no significant correlations found.

more amiable than ordinary villagers to the market mode of governance. Unlike patriarchy and hierarchy in the clan mode and bureaucratic mode, transactions in the market take place between the relatively equal parties and are regulated by price mechanism. Cadres involved considerably in market activities tend to treat other parts equally, and is inclined to consider others' demands or preferences. Once they become leaders, we expect they are more likely to treat their followers relatively equally, that is, in a fraternal style.

**Hypothesis 7:** Increase in cadre individual initiative is negatively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 7a:** Increase in cadre individual initiative is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

**Hypothesis 8:** Increase in cadre entrepreneurship is negatively related to increase in LCA.

**Hypothesis 8a:** Increase in cadre entrepreneurship is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

For the cadre's view of state-village relations, I employ the *cadre's assessment of his/her relations with upper-level officials*. In the Chinese system, the lowest level of the state

apparatus is township or town. The village is legally not a part of the state, but a “mass self-governing organization.” For village cadres, their upper-levels are officials in the township or county or even higher. Village cadres’ relations with those upper-levels are one of the most important parts of their interactions with the state. This survey item is a 10-point scale starting from “harmonious” to “conflictual.”<sup>23</sup> If a village official has a harmonious relationship with higher-level governments, this official is more likely to be a state agent than a representative of the locality. As an “outsider” to the community, this person has smaller chance to be identified as a leader by her community fellow citizens. In contrast, if the official often conflict with upper-levels, it is less likely for her to behave like a state agent than a protector of local interests. Then she has more chance to form leader-follower relations with community members. In short, we posit a positive relationship between conflicts with upper-level government and the establishment of LCA. In addition, if the leader acts as a local representative, we may anticipate she tends to treat people in her neighborhood not as authoritarian as governmental bureaucrats. She may behave more in a fraternal style. So we predict village cadre’s conflict with government is positively related to fraternal leadership style. For these three variables of village cadre’s relations with market and the state, changes in these three factors are coded by subtracting 1990 values from those of 1996.

**Hypothesis 8:** Increase in cadre conflict with government is positively related to increase in LCA.

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<sup>23</sup> In 1990 it is C2180 and in 1996 it is C2190.

**Hypothesis 8a:** Increase in cadre conflict with government is positively related to increase in fraternal-style LCA.

We are interested in how the changes in these independent variables between 1990 and 1996 influence changes in the two dependent variables in the same time period. In the analysis, the two dependent variables are supposed to be coded by subtracting 1990 values from those of 1996. Since both variables are percentages contained between 0 and 100, a logarithmic transformation is made to permit linear estimation of the two variables.<sup>24</sup> Table 3.2 presents the results of OLS regressions of the models.

The first model is the analysis of determinants of LCA. The goodness of fit of the model is fairly acceptable with an R-square at .47. Among the two indicators of market orientations, villagers' entrepreneurship turns out to be significant. As expected, after controlling other community characteristics and cadres' individual characteristics, the heterogeneity of villagers' entrepreneurship significantly decreases the likelihood of LCA. This supports our argument that during the course of transformation from a clan form to a market form of control, the chance of forming leadership relations is on the decline. We don't find significant association between villagers' attention to government and LCA.

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<sup>24</sup> The formula of the transformation is  $\log[1996 \text{ fraction}/(1-1996 \text{ fraction})] - [1990 \text{ fraction}/(1-1990 \text{ fraction})]$ , where 1996 and 1990 fractions are percentages of villager-cadre dyads that constitute a leader-follower relation or fraternal leadership relation in each village. This formula is following the one used by Manion, 2006.

Among the village level control variables, surname diversity demonstrates significance and is negatively related to the formation of leadership, which is consistent with our expectation. Political competitions based on multiple lineages do diminish the chance for cadres to be perceived as leaders. Among the individual cadre factors, both individual initiative and entrepreneurship have a negative impact on LCA connections. This confirms that entrepreneurial-oriented village cadres are less likely to build up leadership with villagers.

The second model is the analysis of what factors contribute to the formation of fraternal style leadership. At the village level, as anticipated, the higher levels of heterogeneity of villagers produce higher percentage of fraternal leadership in that village. This suggests the expectation is right: leaders in a transitional community are faced with more challenges than their counterparts in a more traditional or more marketized community; they do not have enough resources to be paternal. Villagers' attention to government, a proxy of state penetration, is negatively related to the possibility of fraternal leadership. Those who behave like a part of the state bureaucracy tend not to see themselves as members of the community, so they tend to treat villagers as their subjects, not their neighbors. This provides clear evidence that state penetration into local communities pushes local leaders to behave more like authoritative state agents.

**Table 3.2: Community and Individual Determinants of Village LCA**

	<b>LCA</b>	<b>Fraternal LCA</b>
<b>Village Level Variables</b>		
Individual Initiative	-.6241342 (.5555274)	2.876034* (1.871381)
Entrepreneurship	-7.36219** (3.375295)	17.72397* (11.32925)
Attention to Government	.5156741 (.9224864)	-4.194351* (3.109257)
Average Family Income	.139931 (.1632883)	-.400595 (.5492226)
Average Education	-.9224085*** (.3229734)	2.701165*** (1.088487)
Kinship Diversity	-.1001449** (.0483509)	.3056605** (.1621293)
Electoral Competitiveness	.3782888 (.3281828)	-.5993989 (1.102284)
Population in 1990	-.0003626 (.0003877)	-.0005089 (.0013063)
<b>Individual Cadre Variables</b>		
Individual Initiative	-.1726382*** (.0702081)	.2629693 (.2315042)
Entrepreneurship	-.2778119* (.1752857)	1.204496** (.580754)
Conflict with Government	.0191172 (.0738569)	.1006844 (.2489298)
Family Income	-.1637316** (.0757278)	.2896086 (.2542727)
Education	-.0591771 (.0987552)	.3813095 (.3213494)
Constant	3.084776** (1.400466)	-9.329675** (4.660192)
Obs	49	50
R-Squared	.4656	.3638

Note: 1. The entries are unstandardised coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Data are weighted.<sup>25</sup>

2. All independent variables are the difference between 1996 values and 1990 values except three variables: Lineage Diversity, Electoral Competitiveness, and Population.

3. Significance tests are one-tailed. \* p<0.1 \*\* p<0.5 \*\*\* p<0.01

<sup>25</sup> Weights here account for different numbers of respondents in each village. The numbers range from 12 to 30. Please see Manion, 2006:315, note 26.

Lineage diversity is positively related to the building of fraternal leadership. Higher levels of fragmentation of lineages in a village reduce the chance of all village cadres from one or two major lineages, and therefore decrease the possibility of an authoritative and arbitrary head. Among the individual cadre variables, only cadre entrepreneurship is significant, which has a positive impact on the emergence of fraternal leadership. A village head who is involved in market activities is more likely to treat people as equal business partners than bureaucratic subordinates.

## **Conclusion**

In this research I attempt to examine the relationship between the contextual factors of the peasant community and LCA relations. Two dimensions of the peasant community are identified to conceptualize the community context. The two dimensions are the transition from a clan mode to a market mode of governance, and from a clan mode to a bureaucratic mode of governance. I argue that these two courses of transition have an important impact on the emergence of leadership or a certain type of leadership style. Empirical analyses support this argument.

With this analysis, we find a perspective in which to understand how the political and economic reforms in the past 30 years have influenced the leader-follower relations in the Chinese countryside. As an important form of social capital, leadership is most prevalent in the pre-market-reform and post-market reform stages, while least prevalent

during the process of transition. And the penetration of the state power into villages have undermined the traditional bonds between village heads and residents and turned more and more village heads into authoritative bureaucrats. These findings bring us to a broader question: how do market reform and the expansion of the modern state influence social capital in local communities? I hope this research can help to solve a piece of the puzzle.



## CHAPTER IV

### BEYOND ELECTIONS: LEADERSHIP AND MASS-ELITE LINKAGES

This article attempts to address the role of leadership in shaping opinion linkages between the general public and political elites, and its implications for democratic-oriented political reforms in authoritarian societies. Drawing upon empirical evidence from rural China, I argue that leader-follower relationship, as an interpersonal influence process, plays a crucial role in remolding the reciprocal connections between mass and elite opinions, even after controlling the effects of competitive elections.

In the following I first discuss conventional studies of mass-elite linkages and political leadership. Then a theoretical framework is provided to assess the impact of leadership on the reciprocal connections between general citizens and elites. Empirical evidence is based on the analysis of data from the Chinese countryside.

#### **Existing Studies: Mass-Elite Opinion Linkages**

Although there are multiple types of linkage identified in the existing literature, the most studied one is the representational linkage.<sup>26</sup> As an election-based bottom-up process,

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<sup>26</sup> In literature there are two major types of non-representational linkage. The first one is the authoritarian top-down linkage from elite to mass. Political elites shape mass opinions and preferences through authoritative control, ideological inoculation, propaganda, etc. Mass preferences are transformed to support the regime (Lindbeck, 1962). This linkage is believed to be pronounced in authoritarian systems. The other

representation has been regarded as an important indicator of the quality of democracy or democratization—to what degree political elites are responsive to preferences of their constituencies (Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994; Pitkin, 1967; Miller and Stokes, 1963). While the majority of studies concentrate on established democracies, more and more attention has been paid to new democracies or transitional societies (e.g., Luna and Zechmeister, 2005; Miller, et al., 1998). The topic of representation has become relevant as competitive elections were introduced into these societies. Since 1987, the Chinese government has passed the trial version of the *Organic Law of Village Committee*, promoting village self-government and required competitive elections to select village officials (O'Brien and Li, 2000). Though the actual quality of elections varies considerably across regions, scholars have observed significant representational relationship between village heads and their voters (Jennings, 2003; Manion, 1996).

Competitive elections are institutional prerequisites of the representational linkage. To the extent that elections provide choices, winners' opinions tend to be more influenced by constituency preferences than the views of the losers because voters usually reject candidates who hold views distant from their own (Erikson, 1978:526). Another theory of electoral connection suggests that elections promote responsiveness of elites in that

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mechanism connecting citizens and officials is the sharing model (Erikson and Tedin, 1995; Luttbeg, 1968), positing elites and citizens share the same opinions and values because of a common life experience. Elites are members of their constituencies or communities before they assume offices. It is therefore unlikely that their personal opinions are diametrically different from those held by citizens from their constituencies or communities. This linkage process can take place in any kinds of political system, regardless of the presence or absence of competitive elections.

the competitive process pushes candidates to better understand mass demands and preferences, and thus produces agreement between officials and general voters (Verba and Nie, 1972). Both of these two views are based on a common assumption: public opinions are exogenous to elite preferences and mass-elite congruence is achieved through the linkage from mass to elite.

However, more and more recent research challenges this assumption by showing that elites play a key role in shaping constituency attitudes (Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994; Page, 1994; Page and Shapiro, 1992). Elected representatives can not only act as a Burckian “trustee” who is independent of public opinions, but also direct, persuade, or manipulate mass preferences through noncoercive means like “crafted talk” (Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000). That is, in addition to the bottom-up linkage, there is also a top-down connection.<sup>27</sup> Representation is an interactive or reciprocal process in which representatives are responsive to the represented as well as *leading* the represented. Leadership relations perform a role here.

Surprisingly, there have been very few academic efforts to address the linkage problem from the perspective of leadership theories. This article attempts to conceptualize

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<sup>27</sup> This top-down process is essentially different from the authoritarian top-down linkage. In a representational relationship, elites shape mass preferences through a noncoercive and non-authoritative way; and at least institutionally, the general public has the choice not to be influenced. By contrast, in an authoritarian system these two factors are largely absent or only weakly present.

leadership as a dyadic relationship between mass and elite, and assess its effects on the representational bond.

### **Leadership and Mass-Elite Opinion Linkages**

Since leadership is an influence process, as we've discussed, it is reasonable to posit that this process will have an impact on the representational linkage if representatives and citizens constitute a leadership relation. Representation is based on electoral connections, involved in formal channels of control, supervision, decision-making, and responsiveness. Leadership is a linkage based on interpersonal interactions without appealing to formal authority. Studies have revealed that high quality leadership relations involve high levels of mutual trust, respect, and mutual obligations between the leader and the led (Kim and Organ, 1982; Graen and Uhi-Bien, 1995). Because of the higher levels of trust, respect, and sense of obligation, it is much easier for elites or citizens to influence one another. Furthermore, as presented in Chapter II, as one aspect of the formation process of leadership, LCA itself may have significant impact on opinion linkage. LCA is the congruence between public leadership expectation and leadership supplies of elites. Such an agreement may enhance elites' ability to shape mass opinions about a certain policy issues. But in what direction the influence is exerted, from citizen to elite or on the opposite? I believe it depends on the leader style and political attitudes of those who are viewed as potential leaders.

In the previous chapters we've defined two types of leader style: paternal and fraternal leaders. A fraternal leader usually acts like a considerate superior or equal colleague to followers. He or she is apt to listen to people's needs and opinions and accommodate more popular participation in decision-making. The leader not only leads public opinions, but also is responsive to citizens. In other words, a fraternal leadership may involve a two-way influence and reinforce the reciprocally related linkages in representation. Nevertheless, if the leader style is paternal-oriented, with which the leader behave like an authoritarian father or boss, even elected leaders tend to ignore citizens' preferences and treat followers in a nonresponsive way. Then this leadership relation tends to be a one-way influence process from the leader to the led. That is to say, the connection from elite to mass will be strengthened while the one from mass to elite will be weakened.

In addition to leader style, leader's attitudes toward the role of follower participation are important for the influence process. If a public office holder has a positive opinion about mass participation, he or she may pay considerable attention to mass preferences and take them into consideration when making decisions. If this person is recognized as a leader, then he or she tends to be influenced by followers. On the contrary, if this person does not like public participation and prefer to make decisions without considering how the mass public think, he or she as a leader is likely not to be responsive to followers' impact.

Which type of styles is more likely to be in the leader-follower bonds in the Chinese villages? Given that LCA is the antecedent to the formation of leadership relations, and given that LCA depends largely on the match between a leader's style and a follower's leadership categories, different pairs of match will produce different styles of LCA. For example, those whose prototype is a dictator-figure are likely to follow an authoritarian-styled leader who tends to make decisions and enforce them in a top-down manner. By contrast, those whose prototype is "the people's representative" are prone to follow a leader willing to share decision-making authority with citizens. In a society with considerable authoritarian cultural legacies, like the Chinese countryside, we expect ordinary citizens generally prefer authoritarian-oriented leaders, that is, leaders are mostly paternal and followers have very little impact on elite opinions. Hence, I propose a testable working assumption:

**Assumption:** In the Chinese countryside, a local official who is perceived as a potential leader is more likely to be paternal-oriented than a non-leader official, and is less likely to support mass participation than a non-leader official.

If this assumption stands, the LCA constituted in the Chinese countryside can be characterized as a top-down influence: from the potential leader to the potential led. While the introduction of village elections after 1987 may have created a responsiveness linkage from villager opinions to elite attitudes, the prevalent authoritarian leadership

relations may significantly undermine this linkage and strengthen the linkage in the opposite direction. Therefore we have a hypothesis:

**Hypothesis:** A mass-elite dyad involved in a LCA relation has a stronger influence from elite opinions to mass opinions, and a weaker influence from mass opinions to elite opinions than a mass-elite dyad without a LCA relation.

### **Empirical Analysis and Findings**

Following the method in Chapter III, a measure of *LCA* is created; only this time it is at the individual level. For each villager-cadre dyad, a LCA score is created by calculating to what extent the leader categories identified by the cadre in that village match those selected by the villager. In the 1990 data, since each respondent selected three categories, the score could range from 0 to 3. The higher the score, the more the cadre's self-perceived leading roles match a mass respondent's leadership prototypes. For further analysis, I dichotomize this variable as a dummy, with the match score equal to 0 as 0 and all else as 1. If there is a non-zero score between an elite and a citizen, then we know there is a leadership relation existing between the two, and we can call them the leader and the follower. If the score is zero, there is not a leadership linkage between the elite and the citizen.

Then we need to operationalize leader styles, which are related to the directions of influences between a potential leader and a potential follower. With the 1990 data, a *leader style score* for village cadres is generated on the basis of their views of leading roles. Each of the eight roles is coded as one of the two values: patriarch, teacher, protector, and vanguard are assumed to be paternal-oriented and coded as “-1;” whereas, friend, pupil, mediator, and representative of interests are assumed to be fraternal leader styles and coded as “1.” Then for each respondent, these values are added up and the sum is divided by 3. Through this procedure we obtain a score to measure the self-perceived leader style of cadres. The larger the score, the more fraternal the leader style is. To make this score comparable with the 1996 values, it is dichotomized into a dummy variable with values no less than zero as “1” and values smaller than zero as “0.”

As for the 1996 data, since the respondent selected only one leading role category out of eight, a different strategy of coding is adopted to make leadership relation score and leader style score roughly comparable across years. Again, the eight roles are coded into two values: patriarch, teacher, protector, and vanguard are “0,” and friend, pupil, mediator, and representative of interests are “1.” With these values we have the leader style scores of both officials and villagers. For a respondent, if her score is 1, then we know her choice of leader style is fraternal-oriented; if the score is 0, the choice is paternal-oriented. For a dyad of cadre and villager, if their choices of leader style match, the LCA score of this dyad is 1; if the choices do not match, then the score is 0. For instance, if both of an official and a villager selected a fraternal leader, then the match



score is 1 and we know there is a LCA relation existing between the two. If one of them prefers a fraternal style while the other selects a paternal style, the match score is 0 and there is no leader-follower bond between the two.

Now we can go ahead to test our working assumption: the leader style of an official involved in a LCA is more likely to be paternal than those non-leader officials, and that official is less likely to support mass participation in decision-making. We already have the measure of leader style: the larger the score, the more fraternal the cadre is. As for support for mass participation, two survey items are selected: “popular participation is unnecessary” and “public consideration of only simple issues.”<sup>28</sup> Table 4.1 reports a T-score test of different means of the leader style and the two participation items by the dummy variable of LCA.

From the table we can see that in both 1990 and 1996, all the three variables score higher with non-leader cadres than with those who are potential leaders. Except “Popular Participation Necessary,” other variables have significantly different means in the potential leader group and in the non-leader group. That is, potential leaders are significantly less fraternal-oriented than non-leader cadres, and potential leaders are significantly more likely than non-leaders to believe that only simple issues can be put forward for consideration by the general public and most other issues should be handled by officials. These findings support the working assumption that in rural China LCA

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<sup>28</sup> The items referred to here are C6011 and C6015 in 1990 and C6011 and C6014 in 1996.

tends to be established in an authoritarian style, in a style that discourages influence from potential followers to leaders.

**Table 4.1: Different-Means-Test of Leader Style and Cadre Support for Mass Participation**

	Non-Leader Cadre	Potential Leader Cadre
<b>1990 Survey</b>		
Fraternal Leader Style ***	.4698795 (.4998453)	.3886792 (.4877571)
Popular Participation Necessary	.5734463 (.4952763)	.5685535 (.4955899)
Public Consideration of Issues **	.3757062 (.4849902)	.3207547 (.4670605)
<b>1996 Survey</b>		
Fraternal Leader Style ***	.7030201 (.4573114)	.2024221 (.4021532)
Popular Participation Necessary	.5402685 (.4987944)	.5311419 (.4994615)
Public Consideration of Issues **	.6409396 (.4801279)	.5778547 (.4943293)

Note: Entries are means. Standard deviations are in the parentheses. “Popular participation is unnecessary” and “public consideration of only simple issues” are recoded to make larger values of the variables denote higher levels of support for mass participation.

\*\*\* The means are significantly different at the .01 level across the groups of “non-leader” and “leader.” \*\* The means are significantly different at the .05 level across the groups.

As the assumption stands, we expect a LCA relation enhances the linkage from elite opinions to citizen opinions. When there is election-based linkage from citizen opinions

to elite opinions, a LCA relation weakens this linkage. The dependent variable here, the *mass-elite linkage*, is measured by identifying influences between elite and mass opinions regarding a common issue. The issue I employ here is their perceptions of the severity of local problems. In both elite and mass samples, respondents were asked a question “do you think this is a very serious, serious, or not serious problem in this area?” These problems include 13 survey items ranging from goods supply, energy, and industrial development to gender equality.<sup>29</sup> According to Graen and Schiemann, the mass-elite agreement regarding “the meaning of certain mutually experienced events and situations will covary with the quality of their dyadic interdependencies” (1978:206). An important dimension of those “mutually experienced events” is problems confronting members and how leaders perceive these problems and how to provide support. In addition, there are also methodological advantages to use these measures. As M. Kent Jennings, one of the designers of the four-county survey, points out, since cadres and villagers live in the same localities and share life experience, “(E)lites and rank and files may, as shall be seen, have different perceptions, but the concept of local problems as a response stimulus falls within the cognitive grasp of virtually all respondents” (2003:7). Local problems are likely to be “common currency in both formal and informal communication flows” (2003:7) between officials and villagers. Hence, here I adopt

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<sup>29</sup> The 13 items are: supply of goods (market regulation problem in 1996), medical care, income distribution, education, process, public order, birth control, energy resources, transport and communications, protection of the environment, equality of the sexes, industrial development, and agricultural development. The items referred to here are M2111 through M2231 in the mass data and C2011 through C2131 in the cadre data in 1990; M2081 through M2201 and C2011 through C2131 in 1996.

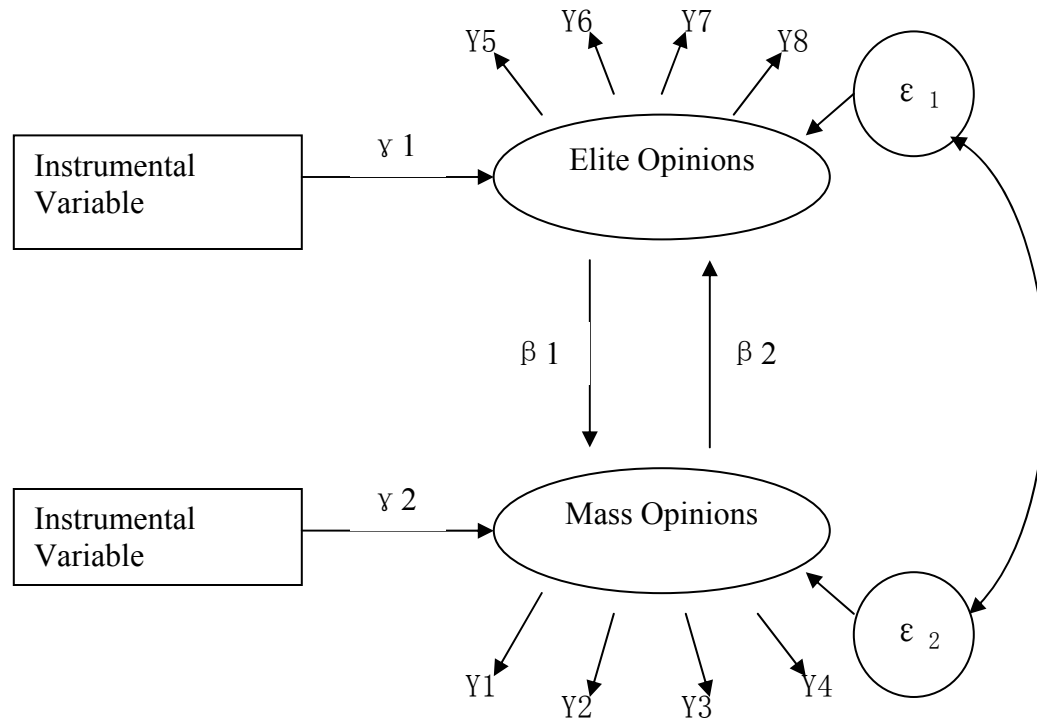
*elite and mass opinions* regarding local problems to test the influences between local officials and their community members.

Structural equation modeling has become a popular technique to identify reciprocal relationship using cross-sectional data. Figure 4.1 is the basic structural equation model in this research. Mass opinions and elite opinions are the two endogenous latent variables. Y1 through Y8 are factor indicators of these two variables. To identify possible reciprocal relationship between these two, we need to provide instrumental variables which are exogenous to the two dependent variables respectively.  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ ,  $\gamma_1$ , and  $\gamma_2$  are structural coefficients.  $\varepsilon_1$  and  $\varepsilon_2$  are the disturbance terms of the two endogenous variables. According to methodologists of this technique (e.g., Wong and Law, 1999; Schaubroeck, 1990), the covariance between the disturbance terms must be specified in a nonrecursive model to get unbiased estimation.<sup>30</sup> So I also include the correlation of the two dependent variables in the model.

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<sup>30</sup> As Schaubroeck (1990) argues, “the residual variation of both reciprocally related variables can be expected to covary. Much of the error in predicting a reciprocally related variable (say,  $X_i$ ) will be due to its corresponding variable ( $X_j$ ). Because  $X_i$  also causes  $X_j$  in turn, the errors in predicting  $X_i$  will become part of the estimator for  $X_j$ . Consequently, the residuals of both predictor equations will be correlated. Failure to estimate this correlation may bias the analysis to the extent that it is large” (1990:19)

**Figure 4.1 The Basic Model of the Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions**



Before carrying out model tests, a confirmatory factor analysis is conducted to examine the validity and reliability of the measurement of the two latent concepts—mass and elite opinions about local problems (Hill and Hurley, 1999). In the 1990 data, out of the 13 survey items, 4 items turn out to construct a solid latent variable for both elites and masses. These four are: problems in supply of goods, education, prices, and public order. They constitute a factor about socioeconomic issues that are regulated by government

and relevant to people's daily life. Statistically, the two factor models fit excellently.<sup>31</sup> In the 1996 data, 3 items constitute a fit measurement model of mass and elite opinions. These three are medical care, education, and public order.<sup>32</sup> And all factor indicators are loaded at a fairly high level.

Instrumental variables are necessary to estimate reciprocal causality. There are three requirements for an appropriate instrumental variable. First, the exogenous instrument should be a good predictor of the endogenous concept both conceptually and statistically. Second, each instrumental measure should be associated with only the relevant endogenous variable, and not directly related to another endogenous variable. Finally, the two exogenous measures must not be correlated or only be weakly correlated. The instruments employed in both the 1990 and 1996 models meet these requirements well.

In the 1990 model, to predict mass opinions of local problems, I employ the levels of *mass life satisfaction* in the county.<sup>33</sup> Villager respondents were asked to indicate on a scale their assessment of "how satisfied most residents in this county are with living here." The scale is numbered 0 to 10 to represent different degrees, from "very dissatisfied" to "completely satisfied." Since people's opinions of macro-social-

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<sup>31</sup> For mass opinions,  $\chi^2 = .009$  with  $df = 2$ , CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.018, RMSEA = .000, and SRMR = .001; for elite opinions,  $\chi^2 = .380$  with  $df = 2$ , CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.005, RMSEA = .000, and SRMR = .004. Generally, if a model has a CFI and TLI > .95, RMSEA < .06, SRMR < .05, we can say this model has a good fit.

<sup>32</sup> For both mass and elite opinions,  $\chi^2 = .000$  with  $df = 0$ , CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000, and SRMR = .000.

<sup>33</sup> The item referred to here is M2100.

economic issues is likely to be related to their evaluations of daily life conditions, it is reasonable to posit that people's life satisfaction is negatively associated with their perception of severity of local socioeconomic problems. Further, mass life satisfaction is expected to affect elite appraisal of local problems only indirectly, through mass assessment of those problems.

To predict elite evaluations of local socioeconomic problems, I use *elite attitudes toward market economy*,<sup>34</sup> which is measure by the item "do you agree or disagree that it is alright if those who start up individual enterprises have higher incomes than the average person." In 1990 when the survey data were collected, China was in the early stage of transformation from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy. This transformation produced a series of socioeconomic problems. For instance, the existing state-owned industries were not effective in providing sufficient goods to meet people's needs; the price reform introduced inflation; the crime rate went up and public order was getting worse; education costs rose up (Shi, 1990; Stavis, 1990). That is, the local socioeconomic problems in our analysis were all stimulated by the market reform. These problems could frustrate people's enthusiasm for free market economy. However, one's attitudes toward market can exert an impact on one's appraisal of socioeconomic problems. If one has a strong commitment to market economy, he or she may believe those problems are only short-term and indispensable costs paying for a reform. He or she therefore would hardly rate the problems as serious as those who are less dedicated

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<sup>34</sup> The item referred to here is C3005.

to market system. I posit that the more positive attitudes a local official holds toward the market reform, the lower levels of severity the official would perceive about those socioeconomic problems in localities.

In addition, the elite market orientation is not directly related to the mass ratings of problem seriousness. Further, these two instrumental variables, the mass life satisfaction and the elite market orientation, are conceptually and statistically independent of each other. These two variables share a correlation of  $r = .04$  and not significant. Thus all the criteria for instrument selection are satisfied.

For the same reason as above, in the 1996 model, two variables are selected as instruments. For elite opinion, the instrument is still about the cadre's market orientation and the survey question is, "do you agree or disagree that open markets produce chaos?"<sup>35</sup> The more a local official devalues the chaos resulting from open market economy, the less likely he or she believes those local socioeconomic problems are serious. The instrument for mass opinions is "do you think there are people today who get more than their fair share."<sup>36</sup> If people think everyone gets relatively fair share during the economic reform, they may tend to live with the problems in local development and believes those problems are not that serious. The correlation of the two variables is  $r = 0.04$  and not significant.

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<sup>35</sup> C3001 in 1996.

<sup>36</sup> M6001 in 1996.



Since our purpose of the study is to assess how LCA influence mass-elite opinion communication, and the latter is largely based on electoral connections, we need to specify the effects of elections. In 1990 election data are available in 56 villages.<sup>37</sup> Among them, 26 villages reported experienced at least one election and 30 did not. Out of the 26 villages with elections 23 reported there were more candidates than positions in the election. So we can roughly see these elections as semi-competitive elections. In the 26 villages with elections, only 13 villages have information of the elected village chiefs (in other 13 villages the information of the village party secretary were collected). In the analysis, *election* is used as a dummy variable, with 1 assigned to respondents who live in a village with an elected village chief and 0 assigned to all other situations. In 1996, election data are available in 58 villages, all of which experienced at least one semi-competitive or competitive election. For the 58 cadres from the 58 villages, 31 of them are non-elected party secretaries and 27 of them are elected village committee chiefs. So the dummy variable of election is coded as 1 if the respondent lives in a village with an elected village chief and coded as 0 otherwise.

For the 1990 and 1996 data respectively, a multigroup structural equation modeling is employed to analyze the effects of leadership while controlling the influences of village elections. The basic model in Figure 4.1 is analyzed in four groups simultaneously: no leadership and no elections, leadership and no elections, no leadership and elections,

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<sup>37</sup> For detailed description of this variable, please see Manion, 1996:742.

leadership and elections. The first group is a control group. By comparing this group with the rest three, we can see the respective effects of leadership and elections and how they interact with each other. The other strength of this research design is its ability to rule out linkages resulting from mechanisms other than elections and leadership, like the authoritarian top-down control or the sharing life experience, by comparing changes cross groups.

To examine whether there are significant differences in the parameters across the four groups, this model is tested in three steps. First, estimate the model with every parameter restricted to be equal in all four group; second, estimate the model with every parameter except structural coefficients restricted to be equal in all four group; finally, estimate the model with every parameter except structural coefficients and factor loadings restricted to be equal in all four groups (Bart, et al., 2005). Then a chi-square difference test is used to test model differences of these three models.<sup>38</sup>

Let's see the results of the 1990 data first. For the three constraint models, the chi-square results are  $\chi^2 = 463.555$  with  $df = 183$ ,  $\chi^2 = 318.658$  with  $df = 169$ , and  $\chi^2 = 188.055$  with  $df = 126$ , respectively. It is clear that constraining factor loadings and

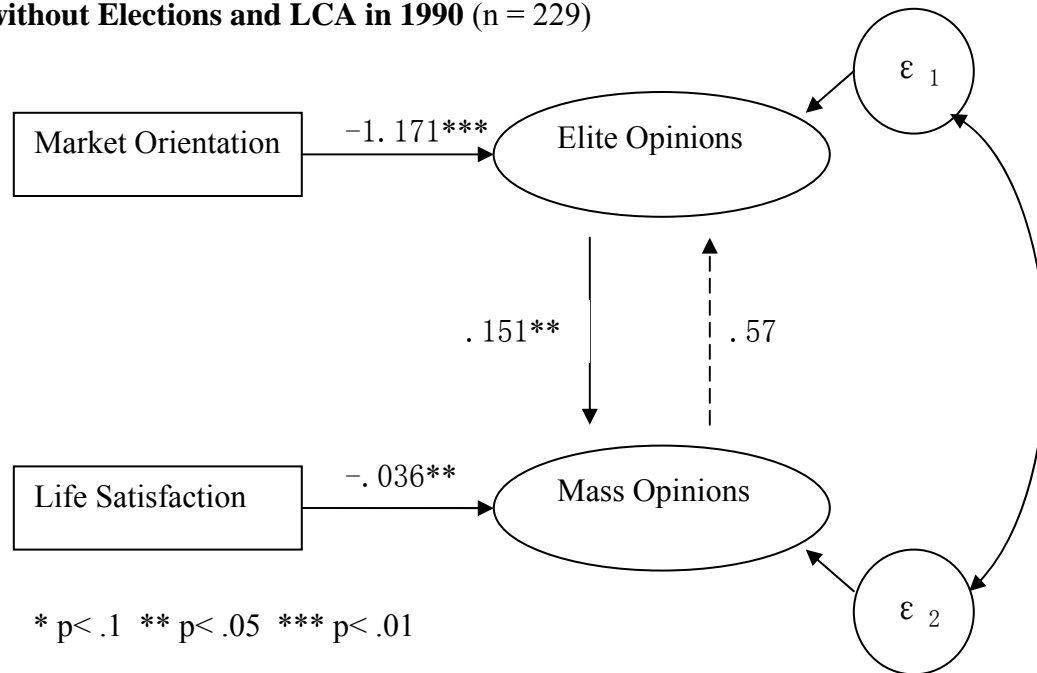
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<sup>38</sup> The procedure of the difference testing is as follows, “the chi-square value and degrees of freedom of the less restrictive model are subtracted from the chi-square value and degrees of freedom of the nested, more restrictive model. The chi-square value is compared to the chi-square value in a chi-square table using the difference in degrees of freedom between the more restrictive and less restrictive models. If the chi-square difference value is significant, it indicates that constraining the parameters of the nested model significantly worsen the fit of the model” (Muthen and Muthen, 1998-2006:347).

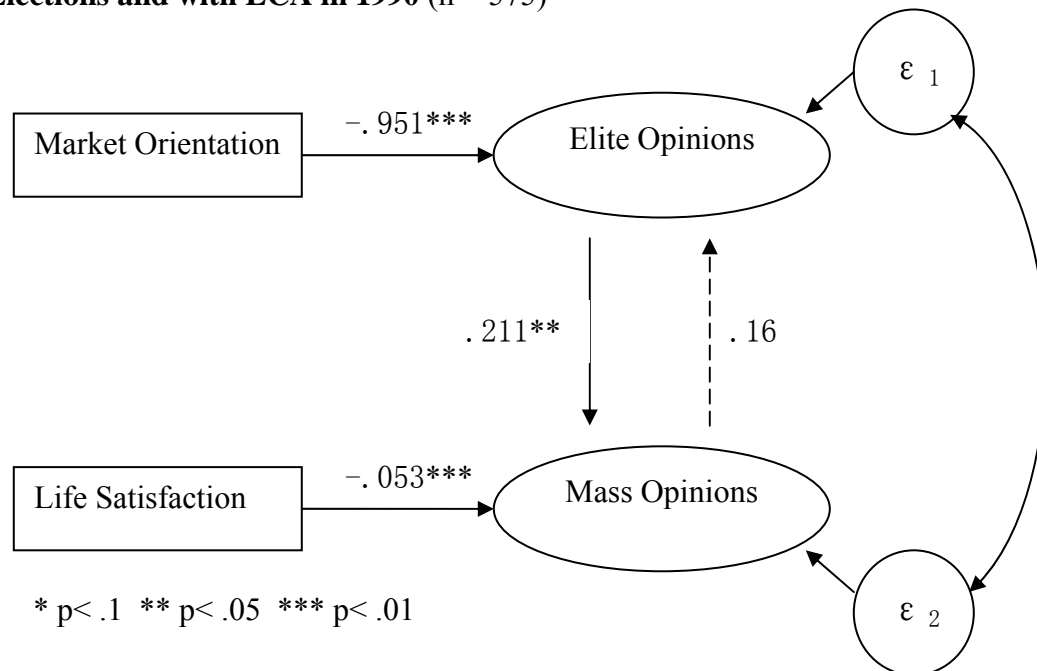
coefficients significantly worsen the fit of the model. So our data reject null hypotheses of no significant differences in coefficients and factor loadings across the four groups, providing strong evidence for the argument that leadership and elections do make a difference in the reciprocal relationship between the elite and the mass opinions about local problems.

Figure 4.2a through 4.2d report results for the model without constraints on structural coefficients and factor loadings. The goodness of fit of this model is fairly good, with CFI = .964, TLI = .950, RMSEA = .044, and SRMR = .047. The first is our baseline group for comparisons, where there are neither the influences of LCA nor of village elections. We can see the two exogenous variables are significant in the right direction. Only one of the two reciprocally related linkages between the two endogenous concepts is significant—the one from elite to mass. Considering the authoritarian setting in the Chinese countryside in 1990, this is not a surprise. In villages without popular elections, all public policy issues were decided and enforced from above. Government controlled all formal media and propagandas. Village residents had little access to information and channels to affect local officials' appraisal of socioeconomic conditions. Hence, without elections and leadership, public opinions were formed in a top-down approach.

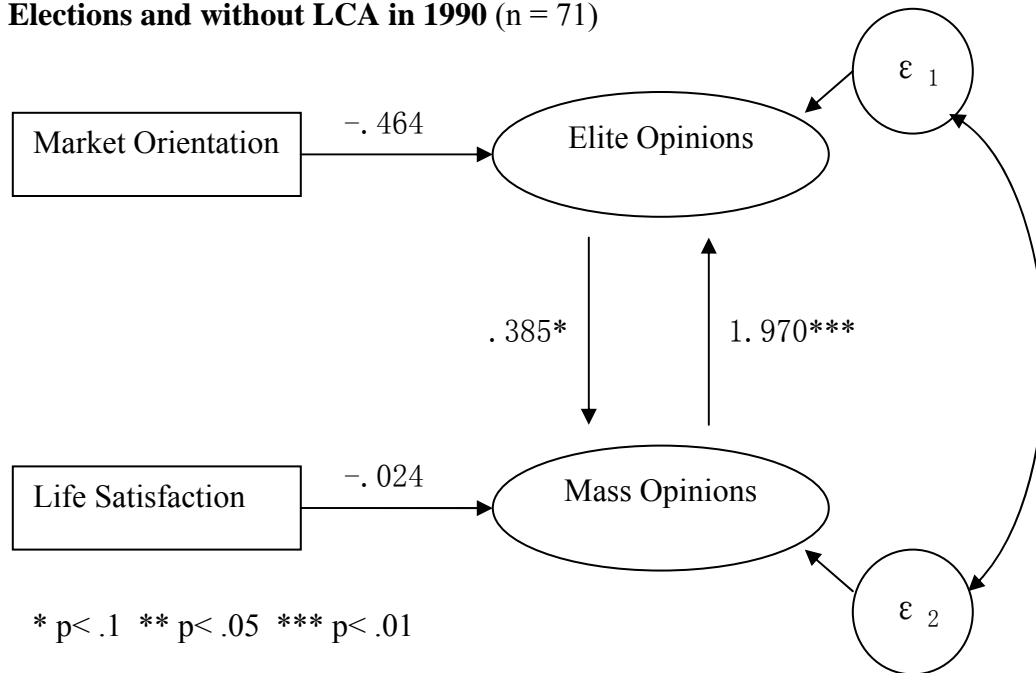
**Figure 4.2a: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions without Elections and LCA in 1990 (n = 229)**



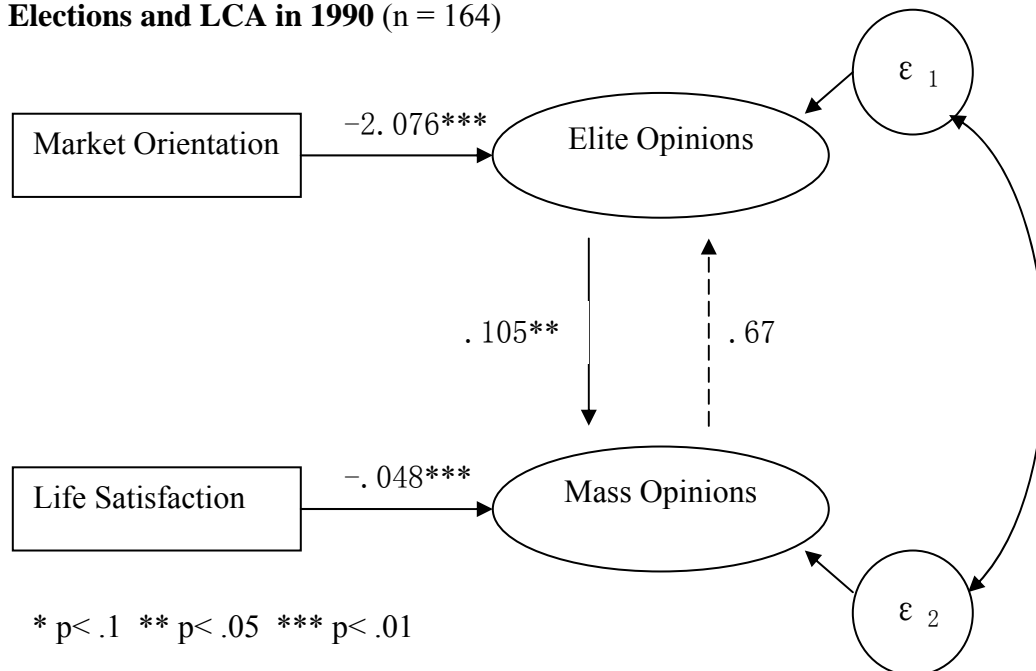
**Figure 4.2b: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions without Elections and with LCA in 1990 (n = 575)**



**Figure 4.2c: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions with Elections and without LCA in 1990 (n = 71)**



**Figure 4.2d: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions with Elections and LCA in 1990 (n = 164)**



In group 2 reported in Figure 4.2b, we introduce the effects of LCA. Respondents in this group tended to perceive their local officials as leaders. As we've been aware that in the Chinese countryside most leadership relations were paternal or authoritarian-oriented, we expect that leadership reinforces the connection from elite to mass, rather than the other way around. That is, paternal leadership does not increase leader's responsiveness to their followers. In figure 4.2b we can see that is the case. The linkage from mass to elite is not significant, while the impact of elite on mass goes up from .151 in the first group to .211 in group 2. LCA does make a difference.

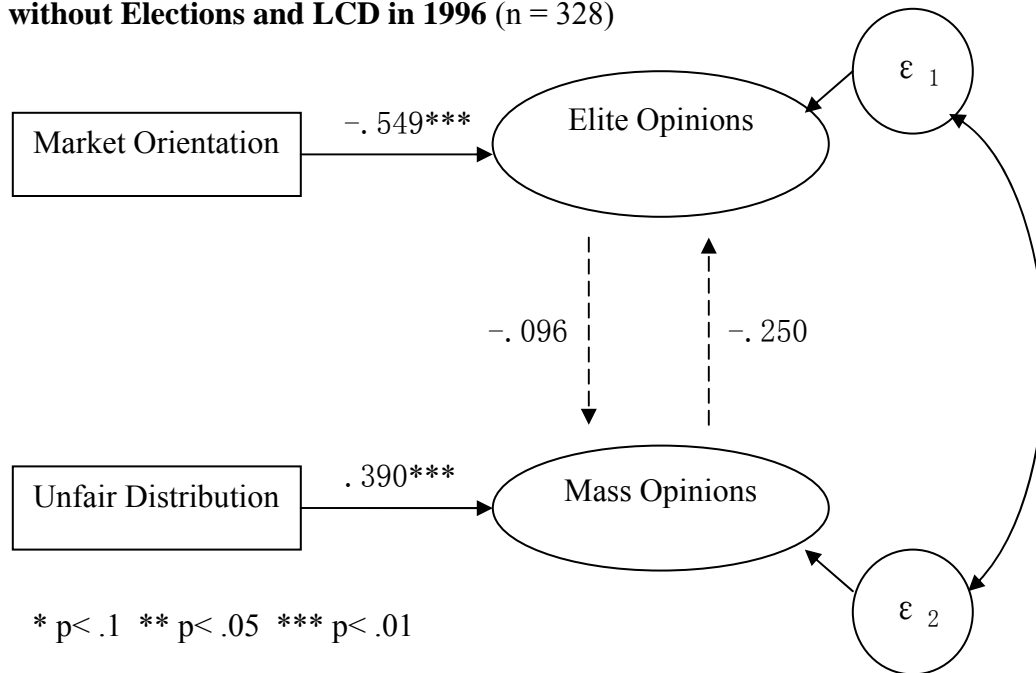
In the next two groups we introduce the effects of village elections. Other factors holding equal, we expect the linkage from mass to elite will become significant. Figure 4.2c supports our expectation. For respondents who experienced semi-competitive elections and did not establish a LCA bond with those village officials, they held those elected officials strongly responsive to constituency opinions, much stronger than the elite influence on mass opinions. This is a confirmation of Manion's (1996) finding of electoral connections in the Chinese countryside. Though it was still in its early stage, village elections had already made a considerable difference. It trumped most of the effects of the authoritarian regime in shaping citizen opinions—the top-down linkage becomes barely significant at the .10 level.

The fourth group of respondents elected their village officials and perceived those officials as their leaders. Since most leaders are paternal-oriented, and they are not

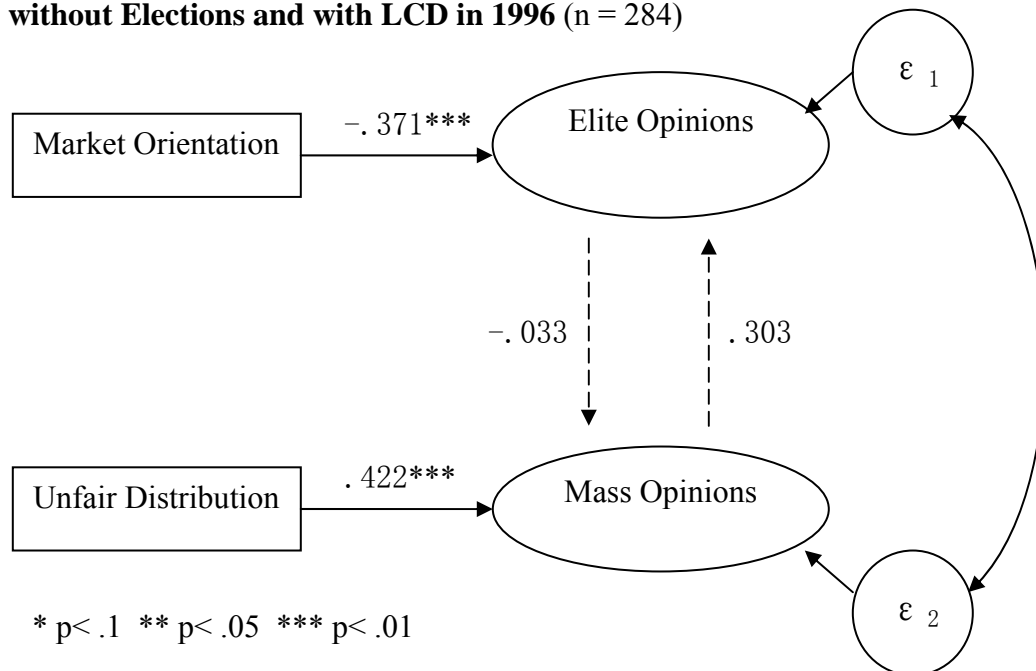
interested in response to followers' needs, we believe the linkage from mass to elite resulting from elections will be offset by the paternal leadership. Results in figure 3d support this argument. The sizeable connection from mass to elite in group 3 completely disappears in group 4, when leadership effects are taken into account.

Now let's look at the analysis of the 1996 data. For the three constraint models, the chi-square results are  $\chi^2 = 498.209$  with  $df = 111$ ,  $\chi^2 = 153.933$  with  $df = 83$ , and  $\chi^2 = 137.046$  with  $df = 73$ , respectively. Again we can see constraining factor loadings and coefficients significantly worsen the fit of the model. So there is significant evidence that coefficients are different across the four groups. That is, LCA and elections do make a difference in the reciprocal relationship between the elite and the mass opinions.

**Figure 4.3a: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions without Elections and LCD in 1996 (n = 328)**

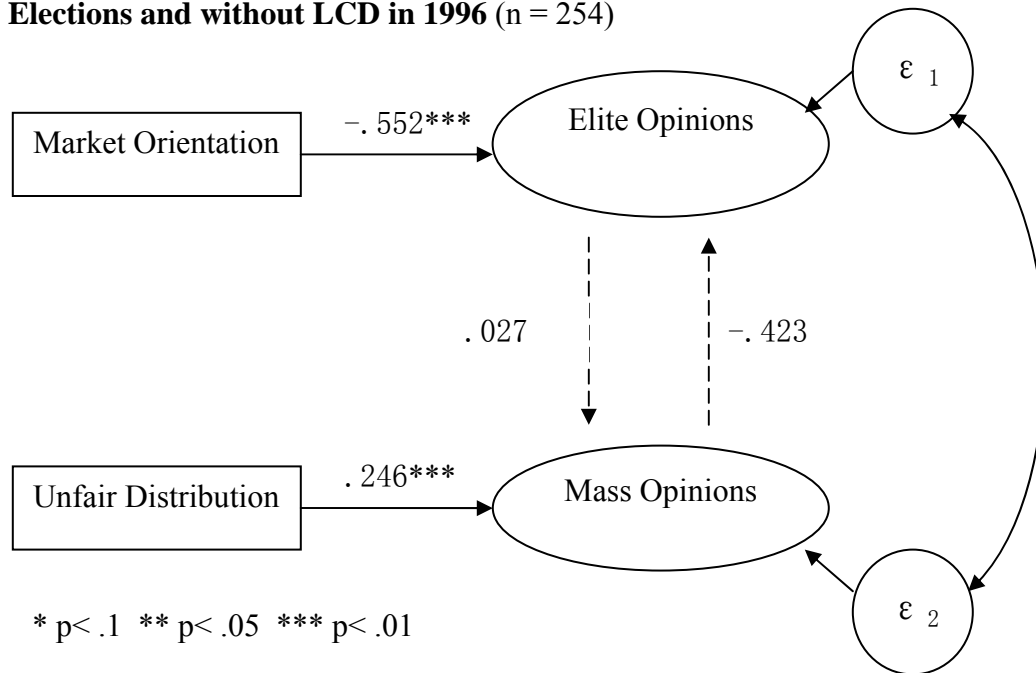


**Figure 4.3b: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions without Elections and with LCD in 1996 (n = 284)**





**Figure 4.3c: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions with Elections and without LCD in 1996 (n = 254)**



**Figure 4.3d: The Influence Directions of Mass and Elite Opinions with Elections and LCD in 1996 (n = 288)**

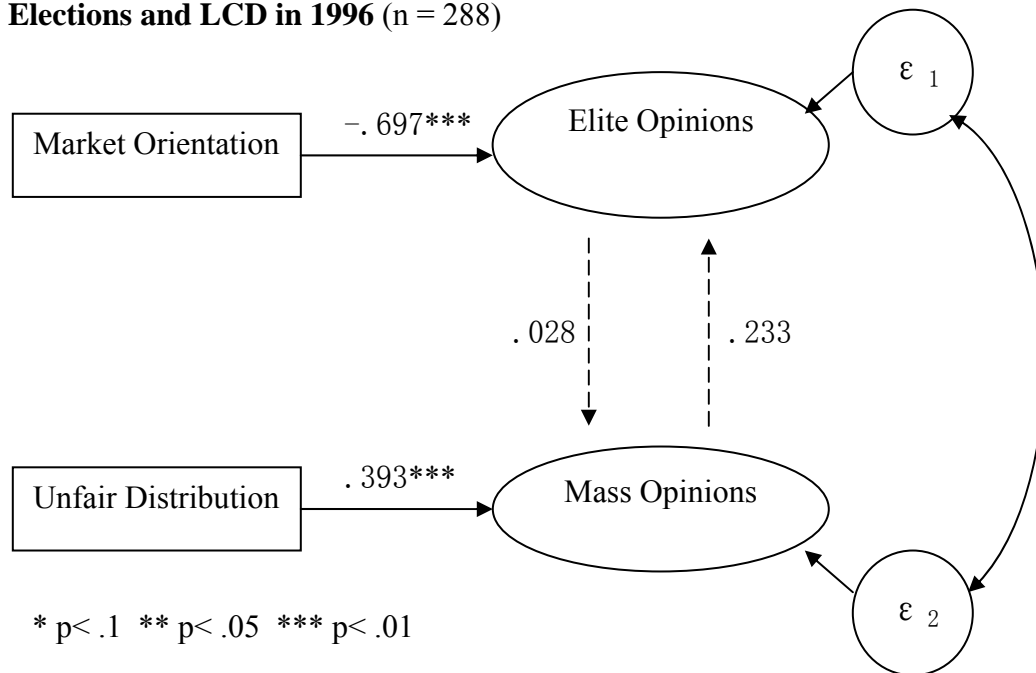


Figure 4.3a through 4.3d report results for the model without constraints on structural coefficients and factor loadings. The goodness of fit of this model is fairly good, with CFI = .953, TLI = .930, RMSEA = .055, and SRMR = .053. Again we analyze the data in four groups: no LCA and no elections, LCA and no elections, no LCA and elections, LCA and elections. Surprisingly, in all these groups, there are no significant influences between elite and mass opinions. In other words, local cadres and villagers do not influence each other at all in terms of local socioeconomic problems in our 1996 sample. Neither LCA nor village elections constitute a linkage between local elites and citizens in rural China during that time period. Why is that?

**Table 4.2: Correlations of Elite and Mass Opinions about Local problems**

Latent Variable Measures	Correlations between Mass and Elite
<b>1990 Survey</b>	
Supply of goods	.1293***
Education	.1342***
Prices	.1251***
Public order	.2596***
<b>1996 Survey</b>	
Medical care	-.0005
Education	-.0171
Public order	.0367

Note: Entries are correlation coefficients.

\*  $p < .1$  \*\*  $p < .05$  \*\*\*  $p < .01$

I believe we can preliminarily shed light on this question by examining the cadre-villager relations in 1990s. From 1980s to 1990s, the cadre-villager relations in the

rural grassroots experienced a deteriorating process. In 1980s, the communist central government initiated political and economic reforms in the countryside. Villagers benefited from those reforms. However, in early 1990s, the center employed some radical industrialization programs in order to modernize its around one million villages. For instance, since 1994 government encouraged all rural communities to establish their own township-and-village enterprises. In the meantime, government attempted to enforce a set of regulations and policy tasks in the countryside, including family planning, agricultural taxes, grain procurement, and so forth. Those policies were very unpopular in the grassroots, which considerably undermined the relationship between local officials and villagers (see Bernstein and Lu, 2000; Lu, 1997). As a result, officials and villagers developed different views of policies or local problems and the degree of their consensus dropped off dramatically. Table 4.2 reports the correlations of elite and mass opinions of their local problems. We can see that in 1990 there are significant correlations of mass and elite opinions, while in 1996 the correlations disappear.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I attempt to explore the role of political leadership in shaping mass-elite linkages and its implications for political change in authoritarian societies. As an essential element for regime stability, a profound study of linkage is important for our understanding of to what degree an authoritarian regime can survive political reform, especially a democratic-oriented reform. Empirical evidence from rural China provides

only mixed support. While findings from the 1996 data do not reveal the hypothesized role of LCA, the analysis based on the 1990 data demonstrates that LCA performs a significant part in remolding the reciprocal influences between mass and elite opinions, even after controlling the effects of semi-competitive elections.

In the 1990 model, three features are salient. First, in a society with a long tradition of authoritarianism, cultural legacies are pronounced in the formation of leadership relations. The majority of leaders recognized by residents in the Chinese countryside were paternal-styled. Second, while leadership could be a reciprocal-influence process, the paternal leadership enhances only the top-down linkage between elites and citizens which has already prevailed in the Chinese system. Finally, village elections in China do create a strong responsive linkage from elites to their voters, but the paternal leadership relationship tends to trump that connection, as the mass public is more likely to follow a patriarchic figure than an egalitarian leader.

Two implications come out of these findings. First, culture is important for institutional reform. Introducing democratic elections in an authoritarian society have to take into account how culture influences the nature of leader-follower relationship. Secondly, in addition to those conventional election-based or nonelection-based linkages, leadership provides another source of linkage. Democratic or not, this linkage facilitates mass-elite agreement and helps to sustain the regime stability.

Yet there are questions left unexamined. For instance, the change in election quality has not been taken into analysis. Since 1990, village elections in China have been improved a lot, especially after the formal Organic Law of Village Committee was enacted in 1998 (Shi, 1999). This study has not caught up the dynamic process of the interactions between democratic reform and leadership. As the elections are getting more and more free and competitive, what will happen for the effects of leadership? We need further exploration to deal with this question.

## CHAPTER V

### LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL TRUST

This chapter investigates the effects of leadership on political trust. In the previous chapter we discussed how leadership affects the opinion linkage between citizens and elites. Yet there is another type of connection between masses and elites--political trust--the belief of the general public that they trust their rulers. Political scientists have summarized a number of determinants of trust. As an interpersonal process between citizens and public officer holders, does leadership play a role in the formation of trust?

As we've discussed in the introduction chapter, political trust is critical for regime stability. Since late 1970s, the Communist government in China has been promoting fundamental reforms of its political and economic system. Those reforms have been involved the reshuffle of interest structures of the entire society, i.e., some social groups lost privileges or benefits while other groups gained. Surprisingly, in such supposedly unsteady and adverse circumstances, the Communist regime has remained a pretty high level of political trust, higher than most democracies in the world (Chen, 2004; Tang, 2005). Why do the Chinese people trust their rulers, the rulers whom are not democratically selected by the people? Exploring this question will help us understand why the Chinese Communist government is successful in maintaining a stable regime while all of its counterparts in the Former Soviet camp collapsed. It also will help us

understand the future of China's transformation: a steady transition to an opener and freer society or a disastrous breakdown?

Thus far there are three theoretical traditions competing to explain the formation of trust: governmental performance, cultural theory, and governance structure. The rational choice theorists argue that trust is based on rational actors' calculation of material benefits, and on citizen's evaluation of government's economic and political performance (Easton, 1965; Riker, 1990; Jackman and Miller, 1996). "Positive experiences with policy outcomes, the competency and morality of political actors" lead to a higher level of trust (Li, 2004:234). Here, the political or economic performance of political institutions matters. To the extent that a government is able to provide good policies or services that satisfy citizens, this government will receive considerable trust and officials in the government will be perceived as "good men and women" (Fenno, 1978:240-244).

However, existing studies of China have yet to provide strong support for the argument of governmental performance. Jie Chen's (2004) analysis of survey data in 1995 and 1999 failed to find the relationship between trust and one's satisfaction with material life and local policies. Lianjiang Li revealed that while at the grassroots level citizens tend to assess local cadres according to their job performance, political trust in higher-level authorities, especially in the central government, derives from the Confucian tradition of being loyal to the emperor (2004:234). In a comparative study of China and Taiwan,

Tianjian Shi (2001) systematically demonstrated that traditional culture is still an important source of political trust, perhaps even more important than governmental performance. Components of political culture, such as values or norms, have an independent impact on people's confidence in their government.

In addition to job performance and cultural values, there is a third line of arguments approaching the origin of political trust. This theoretical tradition tends to understand mass political attitudes by addressing the effects of institutional structures (see Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Bowler and Donovan, 2002). Political scientists have long noticed that a democratic way of governance is associated with trust in government (Warren, 1999; Gilley, 2006). To the extent that elections provide choices, voters can choose whoever they trust to be in office. The prospect of reelection constitutes a monitoring mechanism that constrains office holders from abusing power, thereby making them more trustworthy. Scholars also put forward other institutions of governance affect the emergence or enhancement of trust. In her study of the impact of village elections in China, Manion (2006) found that not only electoral contestation matters in promoting beliefs that officials are trustworthy, but also informal community institutions, for instance, kinship relations, are important sources for political trust.

It is the purpose of this research to investigate the impact informal social relations between leaders and followers on political trust. The evidence suggests that LCA has a significant impact on villagers' trust in village cadres, even after considering cultural,



economic, and institutional factors. This chapter tends to contribute to a growing literature on political trust in China and, more generally, to an evaluation of ongoing political change in China. In the following I will first present the analytical framework, then discuss the empirical findings as well as draw a brief conclusion.

### **Trust and Leadership**

There are a variety of definitions of trust (Hardin, 1998; Seligman, 1997; Warren, 1999). Generally speaking, trust is one actor's belief that others will not do harm to her in purpose, or even act in her interests (Newton, 2001). In the political setting, trust may be incumbent based, regime based, or system based (Craig, Niemi, and Silver, 1990). That is, political trust refers to citizens' belief that the incumbent officials, the political regime, or the political system will not do harm to the mass public and produce outcomes preferred by the public. In this study, we focus on the incumbent-based trust, i.e., villagers' trust in their incumbent rulers.

Why can leadership promote trust? As we've discussed in the previous chapters, leadership is conceptualized as a relationship between the leader and the follower, an interpersonal influence process between the two parties. An elite-mass relationship is not necessarily involved in a leader-follower linkage. According to the recent development of the dyadic approach to leadership, leader-follower relations can be distinguished from elite-mass or manager-subordinate relations in terms of the

contractual or noncontractual relationship. In a formal hierarchical system such as an organization or a community, elites usually assume official positions and exercise formal authority and allocate standard benefits in return for subordinates' obedience, commitment, or job performance. This elite-subordinate connection can be characterized as a "contractual" relationship (Dansereau, 1975). A contractual relationship is not involved in leadership, but in headship, or management, in which elites are not leaders and subordinates are not followers. In contrast, elite and mass can also develop a "noncontractual" relationship, which is an informal interpersonal interaction with certain emotional bonds. Such emotional bonds are characterized as mutual respect, trust, and obligation without appealing to formal authority (Kim and Organ, 1982; Graen and Uhi-Bien, 1995). Only under such situation we can say the elite-citizen relation is transformed into leadership, and leaders are indeed leading their followers.

According to literature on the Leader-Member Exchange theory, the leader-follower dyad can be characterized as a reciprocal process of social exchanges (Graen and Sommerkamp, 1982; Graen and Uhi-Bien, 1995; House and Aditya, 1997). During this process each party brings different kinds of resources for exchange. Such resources are barely material; psychological rewards, such as positive affect, respect, and loyalty, are often in work. In this sense, an effective leadership relation is a kind of high-quality interpersonal relationship between elites and citizens.

The formation of a high-quality relationship begins with a “stranger” stage, then the “acquaintance” phase, finally the “mature partnership” relations (Graen and Uhi-Bien, 1991; Uhi-Bien and Graen, 1993). In the stranger stage, officials and citizens get together as strangers and their interactions are based on a formal basis, i.e., politicians and constituency, or village cadres and villagers. Officials give commands because of their authority or hierarchic status; subordinates or citizens comply because of their formal obligations or material rewards (e.g., salary). That is, the relationship is largely contractual: officials do what they need to perform and citizens do what they are legally required to do. There is no positive affect or emotion involved in this stage, and hence leadership barely exists in this stage. If individuals become acquainted with one another and develop a somewhat more interactive relationship, their relationship enters into the next phase. In this new stage, more and more social exchanges are not contractual: the reciprocal returns of favors are not limited to material interests any more, since psychological rewards are increasingly introduced into the relationship. The two parties begin to share greater information and resources, and begin to develop mutual trust, respect, and obligation. As this relationship grows to a higher level, it becomes a mature partnership, the third phase. Social exchanges are conducted with high degrees of mutual trust, respect, and loyalty. It is this trust or respect toward each other “which empowers and motivates both to expand beyond the formalized work contract and formalized work roles: to grow out of their prescribed jobs and develop a partnership based on mutual reciprocal influence” (Graen and Uhi-Bien, 1995:232). In this stage the

leadership relation is fully developed and leaders and followers have a high level of positive affect and emotion, including trust.

In short, as an elite-mass dyad is developed into a leader-follower linkage, mutual trust emerges between the two. The stronger the leadership bond, the higher the level of trust. That is, leadership is a source of trust; a leadership relation between a citizen and an official is positively related to the citizen's trust in that official. Because of the feeling of being led, followers develop higher levels of trust and loyalty toward the incumbent political elites. In the Chinese villages, where it is thick with interpersonal interactions and informal social networks, the role of leadership in producing or promoting trust may be especially significant.

In the analysis, leadership relations are not directly addressed. Although leadership entails trust, we have no way to measure leadership directly. Instead, I focus on one critical aspect of the emergence process of leadership, LCA, and examine how LCA affects political trust. Since LCA is an agreement between masses and elites regarding leadership categories and since we know mass-elite similarity has implications for mutual trust (Jennings, 2003), I anticipate in this research that LCA has a positive relationship with political trust.

## Variables and Measures

The dependent variable of interest is trust. As Newton pointed out, trust has a “constellation of synonyms—mutuality, empathy, reciprocity, civility, respect, solidarity, empathy, toleration, and fraternity” (2001:203). It is not easy to measure every aspect of trust with one or two indicators. Following Manion’s research (2006), I seek to measure trustworthiness of local cadres as a proxy for trust. Trust judgment usually reflects people’s belief about trustworthiness of others (Levi and Stoker, 2000:476), because people’s responses to the trust question are usually about “how they evaluate the trustworthiness of the world they live in...trust seems to be an expression of how people evaluate the world around them” (Newton, 2001:203). So we can use trustworthiness as a proxy for actual levels of trust.

Two indicators are used to measure the trustworthiness of party-state cadres perceived by villagers: positive feeling and probity. A high-quality leadership relation is characterized as positive feelings toward leaders, for instance, a high level of interpersonal thermometer. In this research, *positive feeling* is composed of 4 survey items that measure feeling thermometers toward party or government officials, including government cadres, party cadres, military officers, and officials of state enterprises.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Items referred here are M6033, M6035, M6036, and M6038 in the 1990 data; M6033, M6035, M6037, and M6038 in the 1996 data. In the Chinese system, managers of state enterprises are appointed and supervised by the party organizational department and many of them are incumbent or former governmental/ party officials. For both

For each type of elite, respondents were asked about their feelings about the elite, and to place the kind of person at a point between 1 and 100 degrees. The higher the degree, the more positive the feeling. A point of 50 means neither good nor bad feelings. The indicator used in the analysis is the average value of these 4 items.<sup>40</sup> Since our analysis is at the village level, the village mean score of feeling is computed for analysis.

As for *probity* of officials, I measure it with the mass respondent's perception of leader corruption in localities. According to Manion (2006), since corruption is highly salient in China, "(p)erceived corruption may or may not be a good measure of actual abuses of the public trust, but it does reflect popular views about official trustworthiness in a straightforward way that is easily understood by ordinary Chinese villagers" (2006:304). In the dataset there is an item about perceived corruption. In 1990 it is asked as "How many of the cadres here are 'clean?'"<sup>41</sup> In 1996 the wording is "How many of the cadres here are corrupted?" The 1996 item is recoded in the sense that the larger the values the more cadres are "clean." For each village, I compute the percentage of villagers out of all respondents in that village who believe a "majority" or "overwhelming majority" of cadres are clean.

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government and citizens, they are agents of the party and the state and should be counted as cadres.

<sup>40</sup> Ideally, we should have feeling thermometers toward the village head who constitute a dyad with the mass respondent. However, such information is not available in the dataset. So I use feeling about leaders in general as a proxy for feeling about a particular village leader. Though it is an arbitrary solution, I believe it is at least partially reasonable to assume feeling about the closet elite contribute most to the general views about political elites.

<sup>41</sup> In 1990 the item is M4110 and in 1996 it is M4030.

**Table 5.1: The Distribution of Villagers' Positive Feeling and Perceived Probity**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
1996 Positive Feeling	64	64.090	7.077	43.091	76.154
1990 Positive Feeling	64	72.258	4.359	63.487	82.526
1996 Probity	64	.511	.141	.150	.889
1990 Probity	64	.359	.121	.087	.600

Table 5.1 reports the distribution of the two dependent variables. We can see from 1990 to 1996, the average levels of positive feeling toward officials drop off from 72.26 to 64.09 while in each village the average percentage of villagers who believe most cadres are clean rises from 36% to 51%. We are interested in examining if changes in LCA between village cadres and the general public in the village can account for the changes in the two dependent variables. In the analysis, it is supposed to use the changes of these two from 1990 to 1996, i.e., subtracting the values in 1990 from those in 1996. However, since “probity” is constrained between 0 and 1, a logarithmic transformation is made to support linear estimation in the following regression analysis.<sup>42</sup>

The key explanatory variable is *LCA*. In the analysis, I use the difference of values in 1990 and 1996, i.e., subtracting the values in 1990 from those in 1996. It is anticipated

<sup>42</sup> The formula of the transformation for “trust” is  $\log[1996 \text{ fraction}/(1-1996 \text{ fraction})] - [1990 \text{ fraction}/(1-1990 \text{ fraction})]$ , where 1996 and 1990 fractions are the values of trust in each year, respectively. This formula is following the one used by Manion, 2006.

that changes in LCA have a positive relationship with both of the two dependent variables.

Besides the existence of LCA, we are also interested in the impact of *leadership styles*. Leadership style is determined by the style of leaders. In previous chapters two types of leader style were categorized, fraternal and paternal leaders. A fraternal leader usually treats followers as equal colleagues while a paternal leader tends to interact with followers like a dictatorial father or an arbitrary boss. As we've discussed in the previous chapters, a fraternal leader is more likely than a paternal leader to pay attention to followers' demands and preferences. This feature makes the fraternal leader prone to being respectful and trustworthy from the perspective of followers, since the general mass more likely develop a positive feeling or attitude toward elites who are responsive to the mass. In the analytical model, I include the interactive terms of the leader style and leadership relation in both 1990 and 1996, which reflect the effects of leadership style in these two years. The expectation is that a fraternal leadership style is positively related to increased positive feeling and probity. Now we have our hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Increase in LCA is positively related to increase in positive feeling and perceived probity.

**Hypothesis 1a:** Increase in fraternal-style LCA is positively related to increase in positive feeling and perceived probity.



As we've discussed in the beginning of this research, in literature there are three existing competing explanations for the formation of trust. In the model we need to control those explanations. As for the job performance argument, previous research has addressed government's performance in promoting responsiveness, freedom, fairness, macroeconomy, employment, etc. (Mishler and Rose, 2001; Shi, 2001). Since the subject of this study is village authorities, the above items can not be applied here. Since 1980s, one of the most important responsibilities of village cadres has been "leading the way in making rich" (*zhifu daitouren*). That is, it is cadres' job to help villagers to increase their family income through providing information, investment, employment, production plans, or running village enterprises. If village residents actually improve their economic conditions and have more in pocket, they may owe this change to local officials' work. As a result they are more likely to develop a positive opinion of incumbent cadres. In the analysis of this chapter changes in *average family income* in each village is included as a control variable.

Another line of explanatory factors is based on the political cultural perspective. Political culture is important because cultural values and norms can affect people's attitudes toward political issues (Shi, 2001:402). Values and norms in a society or community are transmitted from generation to generation through socialization. Socialization process takes place through agents such as family, school, media, and

communal life. In this research we focus on three agents of socialization: civic engagement, media exposure, and education.

According to Putnam (1993), citizens involved in civic engagement tend to be helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another, even when they differ on substantial matters. Communities with intensive civic engagement are more likely to develop a culture of mutual trust among fellow citizens. This interpersonal trust “spills up” to promote people’s trust in political institutions or political elites.<sup>43</sup> Putnam used four indicators to constitute a composite index of civic engagement: civic associations, newspaper readership, referendum turnout, and preference voting. Membership in civic associations is important because the associations train their members to habits of cooperation, solidarity, and tolerance, as well as promote interest articulation and self-government (Putnam, 1993:89-90). Newspaper readership is an indicator of citizens’ interest in community affairs and readers are better equipped than non-readers to participate in civic deliberations (Putnam, 1993:92). Referendum turnout and preference voting are measures of political participation, to what degree citizens are engaged in political life in the civic community.

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<sup>43</sup> Some other researches argue against this thesis and suggest a weak or non-existing relationship between interpersonal trust and political trust (Kaase, 1999:14; Newton, 1999:180). As this research focuses on village communities, where village officials usually have very thick interpersonal interactions with villagers, it is reasonable to posit that a high level of interpersonal trust leads to a high level of trust in village heads.

In this research political participation is used to measure civic engagement.<sup>44</sup> While Putnam used the turnout rate in referenda and preference as indicators of “citizen motivation” (1993:93-94), it is not advisable to use turnout rate of village elections in China to address villagers’ civicness. In those villages, voter turnout is considerably a result of official mobilization, since turnout rate is one of the key indicators upper-level governments use to appraise how well local officials enforce elections. During my fieldwork, in all villages cadres reported that when they prepared for an election, a major job was to mobilize citizens to vote. For this reason, I believe a better measure of villagers’ civic motivation is not whether they actually voted, but how much they are interested in voting. “Interest in public issues and devotion to public causes are the key

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<sup>44</sup> For the following reasons I believe associational membership and newspaper readership are flawed as measures of civic involvement in the context of rural China. First, civic associations were extremely unusual in the Chinese countryside in 1990s. In principle the Leninist state does not allow any associations independent of the state. As a result, citizen organizations such as farmers’ associations, women associations, and the youth league are de facto branches of the Communist Party, instead of “civic” associations. Although in the past decade the party-state has moved from direct command towards a mixed form of governance, it is still successful in controlling citizen organizations in a state corporatist-style, such as personnel appointment, licensing, or direct interference (Dickson, 2001). In a 2003 national survey<sup>44</sup>, out of 2459 villages there are around 240 villages (9.8%) reported they had a farmers’ association of agricultural technology. Within these 240 villages, 67% of them reported that the head of the association was concurrently assumed by township or village officials rather than by someone internally selected.

As for newspaper readership, in the data used by this research, it has a significantly positive relationship with probity and positive feeling, as suggested by Putnam. In China, however, since most media are controlled by the party-state, and play largely as the apparatus of state propaganda instead of as the media of the mass, the newspaper readers’ positive attitudes toward local elites may be a product of the indoctrination of official discourse. The official newspapers may not be able to train their readers to be “civic.” So the positive correlations between newspaper readership and trust cannot be attributed to the civic engagement view.

signs of civic virtue” (Walzer, 1980:64). Higher levels of interest in village elections demonstrate higher levels of devotion to community issues. In both the 1990 and 1996 survey, respondents were asked to evaluate how interested they were in the elections for the village committee.<sup>45</sup> The average values for each village are computed for each year. Then the change from 1990 to 1996 is calculated by subtracting the values in 1990 from those in 1996. The expectation is that increased *interest in elections* is positively associated with increased trust in local cadres.

Media is another powerful way to socialize people into certain political attitudes (Almond and Verba, 1967). In China, most media are state-controlled and they are important means to transmit official ideologies and instill them into people’s mind. Greater exposure to those media leads to being more affected by official propaganda and therefore a higher level of positive attitudes toward the authorities. So we expect media exposure promotes citizens’ trust in party-state cadres. In the analysis, *media exposure* is measured by the frequency of using media as information sources. In the 1990 and 1996 survey respondents were asked a set of questions about their usage of media. The items about newspaper and magazines, radios, and TV are added up to compose an index.<sup>46</sup> Then village average values are calculated. Large values reflect a high frequency of media use and thus villagers in that village are more influenced by official propaganda. Again, the change from 1990 to 1996 is created for the analysis.

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<sup>45</sup> In 1990 the item is M3140 and in 1996 it is M3203.

<sup>46</sup> In 1990 the items are M3070-M3072; in 1996 they are M3060-m3062.

The third variable that taps the impact of socialization is villagers' *education* levels. The average years of formal schooling for each village is computed. Then the 1990 values are subtracted from the 1996 values to measure the change of villagers' education.

Besides job performance and the culturalist perspective, institutional structures are also identified to be significant for the formation of trust. Several institutional characteristics of villages are controlled: *kinship networks*, *competitiveness of village elections*, and *density of Communist Party members*. The coding scheme of kinship and electoral contestation is exactly the same as the two indicators in the previous chapters, that is, the diversity of surnames in a village and the ratio of candidates to positions on the village committee in elections. A kinship network is a type of horizontal social capital other than civic engagement. As we've discussed previously, smaller values of surname diversity reflect dominance of two or three lineages in the village, which increases the possibility of conflicts and disagreement between officials and villagers (Tsai, 2002; Manion, 2006). I expect conflicts and disagreement reduce villagers' trust in village cadres. As for electoral competitiveness, although democratic elections do not necessarily produce uncorrupted and respectful officials, they do enhance citizens' beliefs in the probity and respectfulness of local elites (Manion, 2006). So I anticipate there is a positive relationship between village elections and increases in perceived probity and positive feeling.

Another control variable is the percentage of village population who are Communist Party members. In my fieldwork, I found most party members in the village assume official positions or have the privilege to attend important village meetings. Since their membership is decided from above rather than from the general public, party members in the village usually behave like loyalists of the party-state. They are the grassroots activists of the party and it is their responsibility to implement or assist in implementing policies from the party-state. As it stands, in villages with a high proportion of population who are party members, we expect local officials are more likely to effectively enforce upper level policies, even unpopular policies, and hence more alienated from villagers. This makes officials lost trust and respect from village residents. So the hypothesized relationship between density of party membership and trust is negative. In the analysis, I use the changes of membership density from 1990 to 1996.

### **Empirical Findings**

Table 5.2 presents findings from multivariate regressions for positive feeling toward and perceived probity of local officials. Mode 1 and 2 do not include the effects of leadership styles, i.e., the interactive terms of LCA and leader styles, and model 3 and 4 include all independent variables. The R-squared values range from .37 to .45, which is a sign of acceptable goodness of fit of the models.

**Table 5.2: Impact of LCA on Changes in Trust in Party-State Officials in Rural China**

	(1) Positive Feeling	(2) Probity	(3) Positive Feeling	(4) Probity
LCA	0.506* (0.342)	0.053* (0.038)	1.036** (0.552)	0.031 (0.059)
Interest in Elections	-2.148 (2.560)	0.070 (0.287)	-2.215 (2.790)	-0.033 (0.299)
Media Exposure	2.039 (2.408)	0.144 (0.270)	1.721 (2.570)	0.126 (0.276)
Average Education	0.442 (1.186)	-0.003 (0.133)	0.127 (1.363)	0.110 (0.146)
Average Family Income	1.007* (0.657)	0.251*** (0.074)	1.227** (0.727)	0.219*** (0.078)
Kinship Diversity	0.908*** (0.189)	0.068*** (0.021)	0.950*** (0.228)	0.069*** (0.024)
Electoral Competitiveness	-1.057 (1.294)	-0.271 (0.145)	-1.305 (1.363)	-0.228 (0.146)
Density of Party Members	2.283 (20.098)	-4.744** (2.257)	1.111 (22.310)	-4.008* (2.393)
Fraternal Leader in 1990			1.378 (3.669)	-0.367 (0.394)
Fraternal Leader × LCA in 1990			-4.498 (11.053)	2.453** (1.186)
Fraternal Leader in 1996			-1.725 (5.762)	-0.202 (0.618)
Fraternal Leader × LCA in 1996			9.797 (23.349)	0.529 (2.505)
Constant	-9.139 (5.992)	0.683 (0.673)	-1.548 (9.045)	0.215 (0.970)
Observations	54	54	53	53
R-squared	0.42	0.37	0.45	0.45

Note: Entries are unstandardized coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Data are weighted. Significance tests are one-tailed.

\* significant at the .10 level; \*\* significant at the .05 level; \*\*\* significant at the .01 level.

Results from Table 5.2 clearly suggest a positive relationship between LCA and trust. Controlling for other competing explanatory factors such as civic interest and kinship network, as well as village characteristics, increased proportion of LCA dyads in a village significantly promotes the increase in positive feeling and probity. Only in the fourth model, when introducing the effects of leadership style in 1990, the change in LCA loses significance. That is, as a vertical connection between mass and elite, a potential leadership relationship does foster positive attitudes of mass toward political elites, as predicted.

Among the governance structural factors, the most important contributor is kinship networks. Kinship diversity is positively related to increased positive feeling and probity. Fragmented lineage structure in the village augments villagers' belief that their local cadres are clean-fingered and "good people," since community issues are not dominated by a small number of lineages. This variable is highly significant in all the four models, which confirms what Tsai (2002) and Manion (2006) found: kinship networks are still one of the more powerful determinants of political behavior in rural China.

Another significant structural factor is the density of party membership. Increased party members in the village are related to increases in probity, as expected. The more party members in the village, the more likely for local cadres to be seen as corrupted by their fellow villagers. This is largely due to more thorough implementation of unpopular



policies in villages with more party members in 1990s, such as family planning, unruly taxation, and compelled development projects. Villagers vented their discontentment to local officials by cutting off their belief of the probity of local cadres.

All the three variables tapping the effects of socialization are not significant. Interest in elections, as a proxy of civic engagement, is not significant in all the four models.

Although in bivariate analysis this variable is significantly correlated with both positive feeling and probity,<sup>47</sup> it does not appear significant in the multivariate analysis. Media exposure and education are not significant, either. Considering other studies that revealed significant impact of these variables are conducted at the individual levels (e.g., Mishler and Rose, 2001; Yang and Tang, 2006), the finding in this chapter suggests that at the aggregate community level, the influences of socialization on political trust may not be as important as that of those informal social networks, such as leader-follower relations and kinships.

The results reported in Table 5.2 also point to the importance of economic performance. In all four models increases in average family income are associated with increases in positive feeling and perceived probity. This is consistent with the job performance argument. Villagers believe that those cadres who bring them fortune are more trustworthy. In addition, as Manion's suggested (2006), growing village prosperity may

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<sup>47</sup> The correlations range from .18 to .20 with significance at the .0000 level in both 1990 and 1996.

lead to improved administrative performance; local officials may be less predatory and villagers may develop greater tolerance of corruption.

For leadership style, there is only limited support for our expectation. Fraternal leadership in 1990 is associated with increases in probity, which confirms that leadership style encourages the follower's positive attitudes toward the leader. A leader who tends to treat followers in an egalitarian way is less likely to be perceived as corrupted. From the analysis in Table 5.2 we cannot find the effect of leadership in 1996, and the relationship between leadership style and positive feeling in both 1990 and 1996. This limited influence of leadership style may suggest that what matters in determining trust is the existence of LCA. The style of leadership is not so important as the existence of LCA.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examine the role of leadership in promoting people's political trust in elites. Conventional political science studies have revealed that trust may originate from elites' job performance, citizen's cultural values, or institutional structures of the community. This research contends that after taking into consideration the three theoretical approaches, the informal interactions between leaders and followers significantly promotes the emergence or enhancement of political trust.

Furthermore, this study explores the possible impact of leadership style on trust.

Empirical results reveal only slight evidence. It seems that the effects of leadership style are not as influential as the existence of leadership relation itself. However, this study only examines a particular type of leadership style: fraternal vs. paternal styles. The lack of relevant data limits this study to go further to investigate other important leadership styles identified in the literature, for example, transactional and transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, and so forth.

Analysis in this research does not support the argument that socialization into a certain political culture is important for the formation of political trust. Yet we must realize this result may be due to the level of data analysis. While the effects of socialization are most evident at the individual level, at the community level they may not be that prominent. Future studies of trust may want to employ the techniques of multi-level analysis to grasp the variances at both community and individual levels.

Another limitation of this study is the measure of job performance of local cadres. In the model we only have one indicator, the increases in family income. Although leading villagers to becoming rich is one of the central jobs of local officials, it is not the only job. Future studies may want to include cadres' performance in providing public services, in reducing taxation burdens, or promoting democratic governance. Villagers' assessment of these jobs may have an important impact on their decisions about trust. In addition, besides objective performance, what may matter more is subjective evaluation,

that is, citizens' subjective evaluations and opinions of what cadres have done can be more influential than objective indicators on the formation of political trust.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

Departing from conventional studies of political leadership, which focus largely on the attributes and behavior of leaders in Western democracies, this dissertation research attempts to study leadership as an informal social relationship between the leader and the follower in Chinese rural communities. Conceptualized as an interpersonal influence process, leadership has demonstrated to be an important linkage to hold local citizens and elites together on policy issues. On the one hand, the leader shapes follower's policy opinion through the leadership linkage, which facilitates the formation of mass-elite congruence with a top-down process. This effect can even compete with election-based representational linkage which is created bottom up. In addition to congruence, leadership enhances political trust in local elites. Since leader-follower relations involve mutual trust and respect, cadres who are recognized as leaders are more likely than non-leader cadres to be perceived as trustworthy by citizens. On the other, the leader-follower relationship is contingent on the characteristics of the village community. The Chinese village is essentially a self-sufficient human network, at the center of which the leader-follower linkage is embedded. Changes in village networks lead to changes in leadership relations. In summary, political and economic reforms in the Chinese countryside affect leadership relations, which in turn has an impact on mass-elite linkages. Leadership as an informal social relationship is important in promoting

opinion agreement between the general public and elites and trust in officials in villages. Here leadership is like glue in the community that binds masses and elites together.

My findings do not preclude other types of theoretical models with which to understand mass-elite relations in Chinese villages, for example, the electoral connection (Manion, 1996) or the patron-client model (Oi, 1989). My point is that the interactions between local cadres and villagers as leaders and followers should not be ignored. In the eyes of villagers, the local party secretary or the village committee chief can be someone representing the state, or some powerful patron providing protections and benefits. But sometimes, he or she can also be someone they'd like to trust, respect, and are glad to follow.

### **Limitations of the Study and Further Analysis**

There are several limitations of this study. First, the empirical part does not directly grip changes in the recent decade, since it is based on survey data collected in 1990 and 1996. After the middle of 1990s, there have been several major political and economic adjustments that could affect mass-elite relations in villages, including the privatization of village enterprises, the abolishment of agricultural taxes, and rising land disputes.<sup>48</sup> It

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<sup>48</sup> In late 1990s, most collective-owned enterprises in villages were privatized. In some areas it is incumbent cadres who acquired control of those enterprises, which certainly enhanced the dominance of village cadres. From 2002 through 2005, the central government abolished agricultural taxes all over the country in order to appease the angers and protests of over-burdened peasants. If this reform helped to improve mass-

is certainly a pity not to examine the effects of those changes in a study of rural leadership and mass-elite relations. As a partial remedy, in the analysis I concentrate on changes in most major variables from 1990 to 1996. That is, the empirical findings are not based on the covariance between variables in a certain year, but based on the relationship between trends of changes in each variable. For example, Chapter III reports that increases in attention to government have a negative impact on increases in fraternal leadership. Here the focus is on changes in variables rather than on values of variables in a particular year. With this method the findings can help us at least indirectly grasp political realities in years other than 1990 and 1996.

Second, the association of leadership and political trust does not rule out a hypothesis about a different causal direction, that is, political trust promotes the formation of leadership. Current leadership literature emphasizes the role of leadership in motivating followers' trust in leaders, but does not pay much attention to the possible effect of trust on leadership. In this research, leadership is measured as the match of leadership categories identified by citizens and behavior of cadres. If a villager believes local officials are generally trustworthy, he or she possibly develops his or her leadership categories based on the behavioral pattern of those officials. That is, this person creates the image of leaders according to the perceived images of those he or she trusts. If this mechanism stands, then the findings in Chapter V will have to be reconsidered. This

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elite relations in the countryside, then the rise of land disputes apparently has a counteracting effect. The disputes largely result from increasing cases that village cadres sell collective land to developers without approval of all villagers.

negligence of the impact of trust on leadership certainly should be corrected in future studies.

Finally, there is still room to refine the measurement of leadership and leader styles. In the analysis eight “leading roles,” such as patriarch, friend, teacher, etc., are used to constitute leadership categories. Then the degree of matching between categories identified by villagers and cadres is computed to measure leadership relationship. According to the categorization theory, leadership categories are abstract composites of representative attributes of categories members (Lord, et. al., 1984:346). Examples of such attributes include “intelligent,” “understanding,” “aggressive,” “decisive,” “open minded,” and so forth. A more accurate way to create leadership categories is to generate composite indices based on those attributes. In the absence of such data, I use those leading roles as “rough” proxies of leadership categories. The situation is similar to measures of leader styles. Leadership scholars in psychology and sociology of organizations have developed standardized measures of leadership styles, and the most popular way to address styles is to explore them along the dichotomy of transformational and transactional leadership (e.g., Avolio, et al., 1999; Chen and Farh, 1999). Although it is political scientists who first proposed these concepts (Burns, 1978), unfortunately we have yet to develop our own measures. In the analysis I create the pair of paternal vs. fraternal (or authoritarian vs. egalitarian) leader style based on available data. I deem it as a preliminary effort and hope this effort will help to develop more sophisticated measurement of political leader styles.



In future, in addition to remedying the above limitations, there are two directions for further analysis which may be fruitful. First, study leadership as social capital. Social capital is a recently-developed concept to account for the relationship between social networks and political performance. Putnam (1993), whose classic study makes this term popular in political science, refers social capital to “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (1993:167). Social capital is a society’s glue and lubricant that hold social members together and help them working together for common goals. That is why social capital is crucial for regime performance, especially performance of democratic government.

As we’ve known, leadership as an interpersonal interaction also plays as a society’s glue that binds members together. According to Renshon (2000), leadership is a major element of social capital, and the vertical dimension of social capital. Social capital can be divided into citizenship capital and leadership capital. While the former refers to “those internal and relational aspects of citizen psychology that reflect citizens connections to each other...,” the latter refers to “the character, capacities, and performance of those given responsibility to lead and govern...” (Renshon, 2000:202).

To conceptualize leadership as part of social capital breaks a number of paths for further research. For instance, social capital as horizontal networks is believed to promote

mutual trust among fellow citizens. Leadership, as we've studied, is a high quality relationship between the leader and the follower involving mutual trust and obligations. Does this vertical relationship promote social trust at the horizontal level? Putnam once argued that any vertical networks cannot sustain social trust and cooperation, because social exchanges along the vertical dimension undermine horizontal solidarity and cooperation (1993:174-75). He employed the patron-client relationship and kinship networks as cases to justify his argument. But leadership is essentially different from clientelist and kinship relations. While the patron-client tie does not produce horizontal connections among clients, and while kinship networks only link members within segregated small groups, leadership, like civic engagement praised by Putnam, is not limited to certain social cleavages and can potentially link members of different small groups, and thus sustain cooperation and cohesion in a larger society. Supportive examples can be found in those charismatic leaders, such as Mao and Gandhi, who motivated and united people from different classes, castes, kinships, and ethnic backgrounds for common causes. As such, it would be rewarding to further examine the relationship between leadership capital and social trust in rural communities.

Another potentially profitable approach to further studying political leadership is multilevel analysis. Leadership in the society is essentially a multilevel phenomenon (Yammarino et al., 2005:881-82). For instance, leadership in groups can be viewed as a relationship between individuals; leadership relationship in groups can be seen as dyads or as group phenomena; leadership can be examined at an even wider context that has an

impact on interdependent persons. In both theory formulation and hypothesis testing leadership can be studied simultaneously at multiple levels or cross-levels.

I suggest there are two directions we can take academic efforts. First, examine the boundaries of theories at different levels. Levels of analysis provide a way to specify boundaries, or limits within which a theory is expected to hold (Dansereau et al., 1984). For example, if we want to explain the effects of charismatic leadership on people's psychological traits, this theory is more likely to be valid at individual levels; if our interest is the charismatic effects on social movement, then the theory is supposed to stand at aggregate levels. Secondly, we can formulate leadership theories by incorporating variables from different levels. For instance, contingency leadership theory deals with the impacts of leader behavior and motivations on followers' job performance, arguing that certain situational factors in workplaces can moderate the leader-follower relationship (Fiedler, 1971). While leader behavior and follower's performance are individual-level variables, the workplace situations are mostly at group levels. Contingency theory is therefore a multilevel theory, although previous studies did not explicitly realize this fact and not interpret this model in a multilevel way (Schriesheim et al., 2001:521-22).

In the analysis of Chapter III, I examine the effects of both village contextual factors and village cadre factors on the formation of leadership. Although methodologically I did not use any multilevel techniques here (e.g., Hierarchic Linear Model), this is

theoretically a multilevel analysis. In future study of village leadership, we can test the boundaries of theory, for instance, whether the relationship between leadership and trust is valid at the community level or at the individual level, or both; also we can integrate factors from multiple levels into a single model, such as village characteristics, individual cadre factors, cadre-villager dyads, and so forth. In the pursuit of these studies, we may find a broad prospect opening before us.

### **Leadership and Rural Politics in the Near Future**

A debate has been behind explicitly or implicitly many studies on Chinese politics: whether the Communist regime in China will collapse in the near future (Goldstone, 1995; Huang, 1995). As the political and economic reform proceeded in the past three decades, a number of factors that could lead to a regime crisis has emerged in China: “population pressure, declining ability of agriculture and natural resources, divisions within the party leadership, ...the decline in the party’s direct control of Chinese society, and discontent among peasants and workers” (Zhong, 1996:364). Can the Communist government survive all these challenges and carry out a steady transition to an opener and freer system?

The study of leadership and mass-elite relations in villages may enhance our understanding of this puzzle by exploring the underlying mechanisms that bind citizens and elites together on policy issues. If these mechanisms are effective enough, then the

regime may enjoy a stable transformation. If the mechanisms are somehow weakened or undermined, then the transition will be more risky and unstable.

Leadership as an interpersonal relationship plays as a mechanism that connects masses and elites. Based on the findings from previous chapters, we may make some “predictions” regarding changes in village leadership and their political consequence after 1996 and in the near future. First, leadership is on the decline in rural communities. In Chapter “Community Characteristics and Leadership,” we find increases in heterogeneity of villagers’ market orientations are negatively associated with increase in leadership relations in a village. In both traditional communities and fully marketized communities, where members’ values or preferences tend to be homogeneous, leadership is fairly likely to emerge. In a village in the transition from a “system of solidarity” to a “system of interest,” however, some members become pro-market-oriented while others remain committed to traditional farming. Cadres therefore have less chance to construct leadership relations than their counterparts in more homogenous villages. My assessment is that most Chinese villages today are transitional—they are somewhere between closed corporate communities and fully marketized communities. The implication is clear: at least in the near future, leadership is declining in the countryside; there will be less opinion congruence between villagers and cadres resulting from leadership linkage and less trust of followers in their leaders.

Second, styles of leadership are getting more fraternal or egalitarian-oriented. Findings in Chapter III report that increasing diversity of villagers' attitudes toward market economy promotes the emergence of fraternal leadership, and increases in governmental penetration into village life discourage fraternal leadership. In the former, we know the diversity will go up as villages are during the change to open communities; in the latter, however, what is the trend of governmental penetration? As we've discussed in Chapter III, rural reform in 1980s and 1990s can be characterized as the invasion of state power into village life. However, in the recent several years, we can observe that the state tends to retreat from direct involvement in village issues by institutionalizing self-government of villages. A study based on a 2003 national survey found that as the market transition proceeds, the local state is inclined to loose its control over cadre selection and resource distribution in villages (Shan et al, 2005). As long as this argument stands valid, we can expect village leadership is becoming more fraternal-oriented, which will spur leaders more responsive to followers' preferences and followers will have a higher trust in their leaders, as we've found the Chapter IV and Five.

Now we have achieved somehow contradictory results. On the one hand, village leadership is on the decline, which weakens mass-elite connections in the grassroots and brings more risk to political and economic reforms. On the other, leadership style is becoming more fraternal-oriented which enhances mass-elite relations. Which side will take the upper hand is important for understanding regime stability in China.

Unfortunately, empirical evidence in this research is not sufficient to make a conclusive answer. We have to wait for future inputs.

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## APPENDIX A

### FIELD INTERVIEWS

The primary source of qualitative data in this research is the author's field work in rural China. With the kind help of the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP) at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, I participated in field research projects of CCAP as a visiting research associate for around one year. Fieldworks were conducted from August 2003 to April 2004, and in December 2004. The Ford Foundation in Beijing and the European Union-China Training Program on Village Governance financially supported those projects. The research sites were mostly selected from sample villages of the Fixed-Point Rural Survey, an official survey system run by the Ministry of Agriculture of China. My colleagues and I interviewed officials at the county and the township levels, as well as villagers and village cadres regarding village elections, economic development, mass-cadre relations, and the actual operation of the three levels of administration. We did interviews in the following provinces: Shaanxi (Sept. 2003), Anhui (Nov. 2003), Chongqing (Nov. 2003), Zhejiang (Dec. 2003, Dec. 2004), Hunan (Jan. 2004), and Jiangsu (April 2004).



## APPENDIX B

### THE FOUR-COUNTY SURVEY

The quantitative data analyzed in this dissertation are from the “Four-County Study of Chinese Local Government and Political Economy Survey,” a collaborative survey project undertaken by the Research Center on Contemporary China at Peking University and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. The survey was conducted twice in 1990 and 1996, in 4 counties, 20 townships, and 64 villages. The 4 counties are from 4 different provinces: Hebei, Hunan, Anhui, and Tianjin. While the 4 counties are selected nonrandomly to represent some cross-regional variance, respondents are drawn from a stratified probability- proportionate-to-size sample in four counties from four provinces. The 1990 survey includes 1149 villagers and 59 village cadres from 59 villages (one cadre per village, including 34 party secretaries and 25 village administrative chiefs); the 1996 study includes 1248 villagers and 58 cadres from 58 villages (one cadre per village, composed of 31 party secretaries and 27 village administrative chiefs). 59.13% of respondents in the 1996 survey were also surveyed in the 1990 study.

The 1990 mass data are available through the website of the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan ([www.icpsr.umich.edu](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu)). Other parts of the data have yet to be publicized. For more detailed description of the dataset, please see Manion, 1996 and Manion 2006.

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